

SMITH COLLEGE

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Monthly

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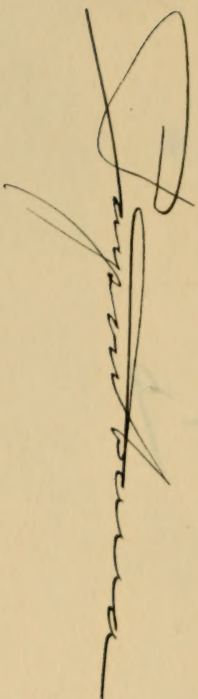
Bird in all covers

You, perhaps, do not realize it, but it is a
nevertheless that by delaying in this manner you are not
treating the rest of your classmates fairly. They want to
receive their reports and know what their classmates have been
doing previous to the reunion in June. We cannot accomplish
this result if men delay with their blanks, so please bestir
yourself and send it along in a hurry. Otherwise, the "jig"
is up and we cannot get the report out on time.

If you have misplaced the first blank, ask me for
another.

Very sincerely,

PD/DeF

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "P. D. DeF.", written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.



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VOL. XXXVII

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No. 1

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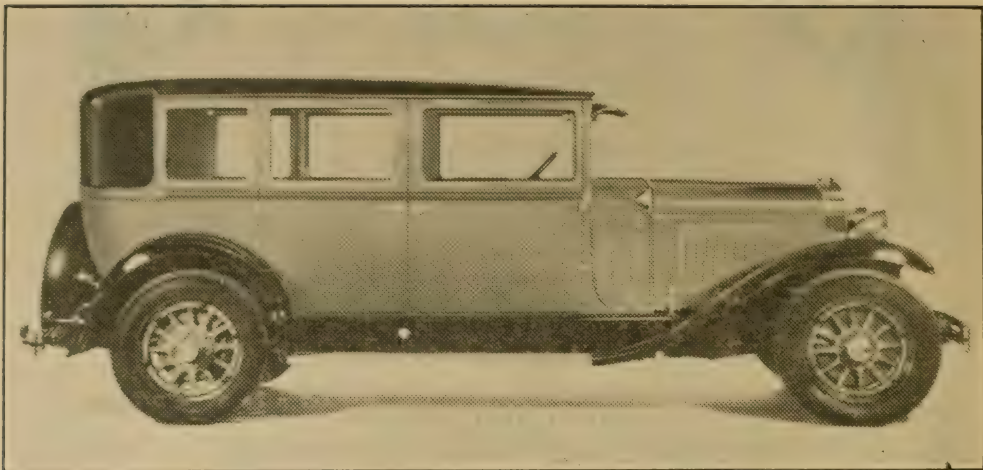
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Smith College Monthly



THE SOUR GRAPE

ELIZABETH SHAW

RECENTLY the fermented grape has been the topic of interest for many of our dinner table and club meeting discussions. It has furnished conversation in many an arid desert of silence, when the weather has, by common consent been buried in a long merited grave; it has lent the spice of battle to otherwise peacefully dull dances; it has weathered the sternest gales of disapproval, to emerge smiling optimistically at the end with a "you see this is the way I feel about Prohibition." Many a struggling author has clothed and fed his children on the fermented grape, while the magazines that published his enthusiastic originalities have developed thriving circulations. The fermented grape has been boomed. Is it not time that we should pay some attention to its less startling, but equally galling companion, the sour grape? Is it necessarily more shocking that a man should spend his wages on bad liquor, and come home to chase his wife over the apartment with the coal skuttle bought on the installment plan, than it is that a tender and affectionate maiden aunt should perjure her immortal soul, in which she devoutly believes, by teaching a credulous audience of youthful nieces and nephews that those grapes which hang most succulently out of reach are of necessity sour enough to pucker the mouths of those who may be so foolish as to attempt to reach them?

There is a certain class of persons, largely composed of those who indulge in such professions as medicine, pedagogy and the ministry, who place their whole faith in the somewhat dubious doctrine of the sour grape. I have my doubts as to

whether the fox who first pronounced his unattainable grapes sour, knew what he was doing in making his opinions public. He did not realize perhaps that in a short while husbands would be telling their wives that big cars were too much trouble to keep in order, that mothers would be telling their children that the theater had so degenerated that it was a great mistake to go often and that children would be telling each other that the possessors of curly hair were entirely to be pitied since it had to be put into cork-screw curls each morning, while theirs needed only to be braided and tied.

Those who have uncles scattered over the country in thriving parishes, and whose aunts organize sales that the deserving heathen may be clothed and converted; those whose relatives teach; and those who have been taught to believe that of all professions that of the general practitioner is the noblest, will, I think, understand far better the misuse of the sour grape than those fathers in business who have either attained or are frankly striving for a good share of this world's goods, and who do not say in a cheerful tone of voice, "It's nice to be comfortably off, but I should hate the responsibilities entailed by being rich", as they look up from last year's novel, in its lending library covers. This responsibility seems to be the chief objection against most otherwise desirable grapes. How well we know the disparaging tone of an aunt, as we gaze covetously at the jeweler's window, quoting with hungry lips our Revelation verses, "The first foundation was jasper; the second sapphire; the third a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald - -" Before we had reached the chrysolyte we would be recalled to earth. "Imagine the responsibility of owning valuable jewels, I'm sure I would hate it!" Or later, as we pass the importer's window with its smart and lovely clothes, "Expensive clothes must be such a burden to take care of!"

Soon we shall have our populace trained so that the hungry woman outside the restaurant will heave a sigh of relief at not having anything to eat. "Think of having to digest lobster Newburg—what a responsibility!" Or, at her home, as she pins a burlap bag over the broken window, "Well, I'm glad that last pane is gone, now I won't have to worry any longer about breaking it!" Indeed how much we can find to be thankful for. There is the perennial minister's remark to his family, "My dears, we should all be thankful

for the temptations we cannot afford", and once I found an old couple who live near us rejoicing over the fact that they could no longer afford to take the local paper, for they told me, "Now we can't spoil our eyes reading it at night."

It is a fact that has often been observed, that self-persuasion soon leads to sincere belief. Five minutes after the fox had decided that the grapes were sour, he would not have touched them, had they been handed to him on a silver salver. "Those grapes," he would have said in a condescending tone, "are sour, I don't care for them, but help yourself if you like them that way." And so it is. When the long expected legacy comes to the doctor, he remembers that when we have fewer things, we love and appreciate them more, that a big car is too much trouble and that a Ford is far more convenient for traffic, that his wife positively enjoys planning her two hundred dollars a year for clothes, and that it wouldn't be any fun if she could just go in and buy whatever struck her eye, that the public school is good for the children because they make a wide range of friends, that there are so few good books now-a-days that it doesn't pay to buy them, and the old Dickens and Scott will be perfectly all right if they are rebound, as he likes the dear old set. And so it continues until the doctor decides that the family does not need a thing, and large parts of the legacy go to Cousin Ben for his mission (he doesn't realize what a responsibility clothes and a religion will be to the heathen) and the rest is a nest egg for travelling (perhaps he forgets how often he has remarked that he could see all the life and beauty he wanted in Brunswick, Maine; and that the City had grown so he didn't like to go there any more).

But according to the Scriptures, "Take the foxes, the *little* foxes that spoil the vineyards—" So perhaps they didn't believe what Father Fox told them about the grapes!

TWO PORTRAITS

BARBARA DAMON SIMISON

I

She shut her life up in a narrow box,
Too narrow for the breadth of other men,
But plenty large for such a one as she,
Who put the cardboard cover down to stay,
And even under pressure will not lift
It up to set its contents out on view.
But, some day, she will die, and then the box
May still remain closed up—just as before,
Though with a change—her life will all be gone,
Despite her carefulness to keep it there.

II

She packed up beauty deep within her soul—
As if it were a trunk in which to pile
The loveliness she saw around herself,
That others did not see, or saw, and did
Not care about—the ripple of a pool in spring
Beside the new-found wonder of a phrase or two;
The wistfulness of pines that filled the night
Beneath Madonna blue in rows of squills,
When she unpacked her trunk she used all care,
Not spilling out its contents on the floor
As I have seen some other travellers do.

LEAF IN THE AUTUMN GALE

ANNE LLOYD BASINGER

AS the car drew up before his house he looked at his watch. He had been out just an hour. Bending his head against the wind and rain he hurried across the pavement to the door; and in that moment of exposure felt the change of the season. Following three days of intense Indian summer humidity, this storm that closed in steely gloom about lamps and head-lights had chilled autumn to death. Tomorrow would be winter.

He felt glad that he had gone over to his daughter's apartment, even though she had seemed fretful at his visit. It was not far; the car protected him from the storm. As twilight had fallen, two hours ahead of time, under the oppressive clouds, he had decided suddenly to go and make sure that she felt well; for in her state she was subject to depression. He had never learned to forget the premonitions of his wife before this daughter's birth, when in spite of all assurances from her doctors she had sensed her approaching death. Women live close to the nerve of nature; they need a man's companionship in storm, he thought. So he had gone; had found her surprisingly exultant over this gloomy day; had fussed over her until she became irritable, and now returned, reassured. You cannot count on women; but so long as she was cheerful—well. He himself felt only dark restlessness.

A card had been left on the plate. The business name he recognized; on the back, a scribbled note: "Missed again. Why? Conklin."

He had been out just an hour. In that hour, Conklin had come, and gone again. Thus for the fourth time in thirty years they missed each other.

He carried the card into the study, and sat beside his fire. The rain beat at his windows incessantly. He rubbed his eyes with both hands, for his shaded lamp made the room oppressively dark; the clouds outside had shrouded the whole day; and as if through a film he strained to see a clear image

of things. Perhaps his eyes were tired; at least, the brighter edges of shiny objects—tables, chairs, the andirons and his ink-well on the desk—made for him only a devil-pattern tonight, lying flat and meaningless before his face.

He rang for his little Japanese servant, and questioned him. Conklin, it seemed, had missed him by only fifteen minutes. He had left word that he had only a few minutes between trains, and could not wait.

When they had missed each other the first time, it had seemed no more than a mischance. They were young and busy then, he himself just beginning to build a reputation of brilliant amateurism in literature, and Conklin entering the rail-road world in the west, where he was to gain importance. They never thought of separation as more than temporary; and they had traveled enough to think of the world as a small place. But the mischance repeated itself queerly. Twice in the west and now four times in New York they had tried, and failed, to see each other. The margin of time grew narrower. Once Conklin had visited his home when he was in Europe; once, when he had gone to fish for two weeks up-state; once when he was spending a week-end in the country. But never before had he missed so narrowly as by fifteen minutes. A rail-road man is always in a hurry; it so happened that Conklin could never wait. He left his card each time; all very alike. The first had read something like: "Missed you. Better luck next time. Conklin." The two middle cards were almost identical. "Missed again. Only in town for the day. Sorry. Conklin." This last card in his hand gave a new note. "Missed again. Why? Conklin." And one could visualize Conklin, writing, "Missed you," in that scribble of haste; then pausing with a shadow of perplexity; writing "Why?" with an expression almost of astonishment; and signing, and plowing away doggedly into the howling twilight street. The new word indicated a confirmation of a secret feeling that he had hated to waste time upon before; the feeling that something more than chance played their lives; that an external power persisted in separating them and bewildering them; and that they were prey to an unseen meddler. A literary man will submit to this sort of sensation; he investigates out of curiosity the reasons for things. But if casual, unimaginative Conklin, perhaps under the influence of this howling wind, delayed a minute to wrinkle his forehead and to write

"Why?" on his card, before turning up his collar and going away—there must after all be something wrong. Just so a dog or a horse gives sign of distrust before a man, reinforcing by instinct an impression which his master has reasoned out of mind.

And on this wild afternoon, under the oppression of spirits felt by so many people when the sky is darkly overcast, such a slight sign as his daughter's restlessness during his visit seemed also to confirm the sense of fatality, hinting that she felt something going wrong, during his visit to her. She had begged him repeatedly to go home, with a nervous energy which, by exhausting her, had seemed to feed itself by her added persistence to overcome weariness, until he had wondered whether after all storm did not cause a disturbance far deeper than consciousness within her. At the time he had considered her to be arguing against her wishes, out of consideration for him; and so he had answered her fretfulness with stubborn calm, until at the end of half an hour she had suddenly fallen silent, drooping as if doped with a sleeping-powder; and had murmured that if he would only run away and stop disturbing her she could rest before dinner; and he had been satisfied, and had returned. These events he played over again now, very slowly, and told himself that more than her condition caused her irritability; that swinging as she was in the turn of the tide of life, giving more of herself away than her strength afforded, half-dead, perhaps, because drained of energy, but half-immortal, since creating like a goddess in herself, she had sensed the alien force in his life which separated him from Conklin, and had tried, not understanding her own motives, to help him trick it.

Under the intensity of his study, her nervousness that had seemed a coincidence at first became in turn the proof of that unnatural interference, and convinced him that more than chance separated him from Conklin. But he could not guess any reason for that separation. Why, after all, should fate choose Conklin for subject? They had never been intimate friends; and inevitably they must have drifted apart as they pursued their different lives. He could scarcely understand his own interest in the rail-road man. Met by chance when he himself had just graduated from college, and Conklin, five years younger, had run away from school, they had chosen to make their way around the world together, for

adventure. A queer wanderer named Capshaw, who must have been a little older than either of them, made the third of the party. None of them defined the reason for such choice of company; they had nothing in common but the escapade; but they had enjoyed each other. Obviously they would have to part in the end, since one was a born tramp, one a dabbler with books, and one a self-making novice in business. They had known it when they came back to New York. Conklin was a less interesting boy than undisciplined Capshaw; if they had met again once or twice it would have satisfied them both. But—to lose each other! In so small a world, in one continent, for two men used to travel and wide friendship to be separated forever, stung one to a defiance of luck, till from chafing their interest in each other was inflamed; and the memory of old friendship perpetuated itself in a disproportionate bond. Thus, though he told himself that rough Conklin had virtually become a memory more than thirty years ago, he could not forget the ominous management which set fifteen minutes' time between them. And little Conklin's rugged face hailed itself before his eyes as he had last seen it on a morning in New York following their trip, to haunt him forever.

They had parted so unexpectedly then. Standing in the lobby of their hotel, they had laid their plans, to do errands, see people, buy a hat. "I will see you here in an hour, then," Conklin had said. The words kept ringing louder in his ears nowadays: "I will see you here in an hour, then." Matter-of-fact, precise. Conklin walked one way, he and Capshaw another. He never saw Conklin again. When they returned, they found a note explaining that Conklin's mother was ill; his father had telegraphed; he had gone at once. They had been disappointed; but they would meet later. And Capshaw did meet Conklin later—many times; he, the casual vagabond, could drop in at Conklin's headquarters and nearly always find him, even in an hour between trips, or could meet him unexpectedly out on the far ranges, or could find him in the cities of the eastern or western seaboard, where he went only once a year. Capshaw met everybody; he carried messages between them. This malign luck never touched the adventurer.

The plain square face of Conklin! Mouse-brown hair, brown skin, lumpy features already wrinkled and homely

from squinting in the sun. It was no weird mask to haunt one for thirty years or so. If it had been Capshaw, instead, he would have gained in losing him. For Capshaw as he had found him first had been a man to stare at and remember: tall, spare, darkly savage; his teeth and eyes shone; he had no regard for appearances. He was one of those men who, while so passionate as to be made ill from anger or the contemplation of suffering, yet practise rigid asceticism, betraying by their severity the nature of their dreams. If he had lost Capshaw, he would always have remembered the tiger-like man with whom he had adventured once, and who had vanished to perpetuate himself in romantic memory. Yet Capshaw came back to him yearly, sometimes oftener; while it was ugly little Conklin whom some storm of destiny, like the rain and wind without, tore away out of reach. The face of Capshaw was not to become an ideal; it was to be exposed to view in every stage of its decay: through the brief prosperity of his life when he tried to settle down, through the pinching times of destitution when he could find no work; when it received a scar during the world war; when the hair and the thin moustache grizzled and lost their startling blackness; when the brows came to beetle over eyes with drooping lids; when lines of relaxation fell from the inner corners of those eyes downward to the cheek; when vertical creases etched themselves on either side of the thin mouth, and the smooth throat which had been pale and straight as a column was dug out into cords. Such decay appeared naked when Capshaw came every year; but the immature features of an undistinguished boy remained with photographic clearness to be remembered always.

And again this night a fear came in around his curtains from the night that some day luck would desert him in his relationship with Capshaw too; that this unbound wanderer would also drift away from his circle, and leave him alone. Possibly more might disappear; as the enchantment widened, every friend one by one would fall beneath a spell, till he could never again find those worth calling companions, with whom he had hunted, or studied, or enjoyed his life. And he would search the city, but see only strange faces; for fate would have cleared the others from his path, till not even a heel of them would be visible, as in a fraction of a second they moved beyond sight, hunting him, hunted by him, separated

forever in the puzzle of circumstance. Such imaginative stuff hazed his judgment tonight as never before; and it intensified the bafflement of every recent parting from Capshaw; catching again the reverberations of his mood when, months ago, in the bustle of a sub-way platform, he had called after him, feeling infinitely wistful; but saying, with a shame-faced gruffness, "Come back—do you hear? Don't lose yourself!" The tall grey fellow had nodded; his face had glimmered weirdly in the electric glare, as faces ought to look when you see them for the very last time; and then he had gone; the crowds had received him into their heart; and silence had fallen.

* * * * *

Thus on a streaming night, alone with a card which marked one more mischance, the man brooded his loneliness. And his thoughts were deadly-serious to him then. But when, next day, in the clean bravery of winter sunshine, he met Capshaw in his worn familiar tweeds at a block from his door, he forgot such nonsense in the commonplaces of greeting; and only the fact of Conklin's advent remained as a queer mischance.


ENTRANCE

KATHERINE S. BOLMAN

I have wept and bruised my hands,
Till I could weep no more,—
I found it was a useless thing
To beat upon your door.
I thought the way was barred,
Beyond your high stone wall,
Until I found the garden gate
Was never closed at all!

VISAS

ANNE ANDREW

 COLD wind blew twilight downstream towards us as we left Budapest for Vienna and Linz. As to my fate during the next twenty-four hours we were not quite sure, Paulette and I. Hers was to be simple enough, for she was on the boat bound for Vienna and, after a few hours of sighting, thence to Linz and Paris, but I was not as lucky. Through misunderstandings I had no transit visa for Hungary which I was hoping to leave. Lenient officials by persuasions had let me on the boat, but they had ordered me to leave at Szob, the frontier, buy my Hungarian visa,, take the six o'clock morning train on which I would buy my Czechoslovakian visa, later, my Austrian visa, and arrive in Vienna at five that night ready to resume my boat trip up the Danube to Linz. I was to be traveling in German speaking lands where neither my English nor my extremely bad French would be of great assistance, nor would Paulette's able tongue help me, for she had to remain on board to take care of our luggage. We talked long and it was advice in general and advice in particular which she gave me. For the advice in general, she taught me to count up to ten in German and she wrote down some useful expressions. I felt quite capable and poised, much more so than when I knew I was landing in a France, the rudiments of whose language I had been learning for four years. It was, however, time to leave and say au revoir.

The boat moved slowly away from the pier. It took all the light with it and in the midst of the light was Paulette waving goodbye. Slowly upstream it went and was suddenly hidden by a mass of blackness. Only the rush of the waters down to Budapest could be heard.

We left the landing and walked along the muddy paved streets of midnight Szob. Two arms supported me. One belonged to the short, dark Hungarian douane who spoke occasionally in scratchy German gutturals. His remarks

evidently verged on coarseness, for the "police" (not gendarme but "police" as he insisted) stopped now and then to laugh. His was the other arm. He, too, was a short man but light in complexion and flabbier in body. His hand resting on my arm was covered by a white cotton glove. He had told me that during the war he had been in a Russian prison camp where his hand had been cut off. It had been replaced by a waxen one of hard colors. Now I shivered as I felt its nothingness rest on my arm.

We walked endlessly past black houses and blacker trees. We passed the village cafe. We walked on and on to the station where soldiers paced up and down or lounged in small sleepy groups. In the bare military office an official in shirt-sleeves stamped my passport, while another pulled the bed-clothes of his cot over his head. Still a third said he hoped I could get my Czech visa on the 6 o'clock train. After a moment of handshakings we were again outside. Then, acting on the decision of the "police" we returned to the cafe, and entered a large common room, oblong and wooden with a sordidness the uniforms of the soldiers intensified. We went to sit at the further end near the gypsy musicians who were dirty and inharmonious. For a time I talked of America and fiancé—Hungarians have such respect for that sort of thing—though he was, sad to say, only mythical. As I talked I was watching the soldiers gathered in one group and then four huge loud men amusing themselves with two gingham-dressed sisters, quite homely and rather doubtful. Shortly a Czechoslovakian soldier proud of his style asked me to waltz. (Would I be able to get my Czech visa?) Then the Hungarian national dance, the Tsardas. We danced to the straining zither and violins. During long intervals I talked to the "police" refusing food and drink, for I could not bear the thought of being under any obligation to them.

At three the cafe closed. I had intended to say good-night to the gentlemen and go to the station but they would not have it. Verboten. They would look out for me and, too, I must rest. The "police" seemed suddenly unable to express himself in French concerning his reiterating the word Verboten. Realizing the futility of a struggle I went with them to the douane's room in a nondescript cottage near the cafe. We entered the door, passed through a sort of kitchen to a small bedroom where the police lit a candle. In the

unsteady light I saw two single beds, a table, chairs and vague overhanging shadows. I sat down and opened up my map and books, all I had taken from the boat. I glanced up and to my amazement the douane was divesting himself of coat, collar, tie, shoes, socks, and garters. Then he lay down on the bed, pulled up the comforter, sighed, and snored. I wanted to laugh, I wanted to cry but I lit a cigarette and wrote down expenses.

In a short while the police interrupted me and said I should rest; besides, the candle had only a half an inch of wax left and pft—it would be out. Please to lie down and rest. His insistence was command; I obeyed. The light was blown out. Between the snores of the douane I heard a clock strike one, two, three, four. Silence seemed to shriek at me. The police creaked over and sat creak, creak on the edge of the bed. I could see nothing but I sensed everything. I waited. The whole of life, all emotions and thoughts, roared through my brain, and in the following silence so dead, I knew. My surroundings came into my field of consciousness and I realised that the police had left—that he had gone in that moment of silence. It was no dream, but reality no longer fearful. I lit the candle and by its light wrote on a scrap of paper, "Merci mille fois messieurs." The candle sputtered and went out. Somehow I left the man, somehow I left the room, the house, the street. Good God! would I get my visa and the train? Again I heard a clock striking.

It was a fresh sweet morning of late summer. The muddy road to the station felt soft underfoot; overhead the sky was growing a soft blue, leaves were a shiny gray green. The breeze came fresh and gentle as I strolled along in mood with the day. Yet the visa—

Arriving at the station and using my German expressions, I bought my ticket. Time and to spare was mine so I looked over my map which interested a bored Czech soldier. In the course of our pantomimic conversation I learned I would have to return to Budapest for my Czech visa. I knew I could not do that; I had to get my visa and go on to Vienna. While I waited, he went to search for a French-speaking official.

I saw the six o'clock train leave. The next one would leave at ten o'clock. If I were unable to take it—but there was no use thinking of that nor of the hunger I felt after

twenty-four empty hours. Up and down I paced. Seven o'clock. The soldier came back with the official. We talked uselessly. I said why I had to take the train, why I must get my visa. He replied that I might possibly get it there at the station, at any rate not on the train. Still he thought it advisable to return to Budapest. I talked and talked. Eight o'clock. He went away and came back. His idea had not been successful. We talked and talked. I began to feel rather sorry for myself. Nine o'clock. He went away again and came back with the same sad look. Nine-thirty. I felt extremely sorry for myself. Tears came to my eyes. Nine forty-five the train came in. Again the official left. Nine fifty. He returned again, smiling. At last he had managed so I was to have my visa. He shoved me into a small room where two officers were busy writing. One arose, pulled on his white gloves, felt his sword, adjusted his cape, put on his cap, glanced at me and marched out. The other after a few moments of frantic writing handed me my passport. I grabbed it, rushed out to the train and jumped on. It was ten o'clock.

As I rode up to Vienna through the wooded lands and marshes I wondered if they ever knew what I meant when I wrote "Merci mille fois messieurs."

IN THE MODERN MANNER

PATTY WOOD

Bend low, goldenrod,
in the flying wind,
in the brown grass—
bend low

Dust will swirl —
leaf on dry leaf,
scraping—
tardy warmth of sun
sickening to die

Bend low, goldenrod,
above a summer
laid away in time.

JAFFA GATE

RACHEL GRANT

The air is ashen
 With the passing of flocks,
 Grey sheep, their shoulders
 Rising unequally, press at the foot
 Of the tall arch—
 Its sudden emptiness of heat
 Pours like a fall of water
 Over them.
 Inside the seller of licorice water
 Clinks his chill cymbals
 And the herders pause;
 In the far corner a story teller
 Leans forward from his heels,
 Chanting legends of glory,
 His voice taut with their splendor—
 And there, the sand-prophet,
 His fingers flickering
 Between the cold threads of falling sand
 Stares at the magic forming
 On his silver tray.

A shout—a quick shudder—and the flock
 Moves out, under a furious, blue sky—

"FOR KING AND COUNTRY"

ELIZABETH WHEELER

AT the heart of Edinburgh, within the battlements of her Castle, stands the Scottish National War Memorial. The doorway is superscribed with the words "Lest we forget." Beyond, the walls of the dim-lit hall bear panels "To the glory of God" and to the memory of all those who laid down their lives in the Great War. Here are represented all the Scottish regiments, the Air Force, the Navy, chaplains, surgeons and nurses; all other men and women who died; and even the canaries and rats who by their own deaths warned soldiers of the approach of gas. The names, written in gold, of battlefields—Verdun, Ypres, Jutland, Gallipoli, Palestine—shine from the walls; and also blazoned there, are the sublimest expressions uttered by man through the ages concerning heroism and death and resurrection. The light through mullioned windows falls softly on burnished coats-of arms and tattered regimental flags. The only sound to be heard is the ceaseless muffled fall of slow footsteps passing through the hall—the host of the living come to pay homage to the dead. Some bore arms on the battlefields named above them in the company of the fallen here commemorated. Some approach as pilgrims to the shrine of loved ones who died for King and Country. And others who never knew the horror of a battlefield or the grief of an irreparable loss, go out from this hallowed place initiate into the proud sorrow of a nation.

These last will doubtless walk in silence down the stone causeway, thinking not at all, feeling poignantly as they have never felt before. They pass under the arched outer gate with its defiant motto—"Nemo me impune lacessit", and cross the open square before the Castle, walking more briskly as who would banish from their hearts a new, unwelcome emotion. But at the head of High Street, a man with horribly disfigured face calls, "Postcards and guide to the Castle" in a half-strangled voice. Up the middle of the

street wanders a shabby, bareheaded man singing "The Long, Long Trail," his hands groping, his eyes unseeing.

No, we cannot escape however much we would. Because the war scarcely touched us, and so has receded into history with the passing of ten years, the recurrent sight of the suffering it has wrought must stab us the more keenly. And more heartrending than the countless memorials to the dead are the innumerable wrecks of the living.

Some few Americans to whom the name of Robert Bruce is hallowed will visit the battlefield of Bannockburn. It is, however, a little frequented spot, but there is a guide who will reconstruct the battle for visitors. He is shabbily dressed, gray and haggard of face, and carries a cane which he uses to point out the positions of the opposing armies—but he drags one leg when he walks. He talks well in a broad Highland accent, and with his words the rolling fields echo again to the war cry of the clans. One peaceful summer afternoon standing on the rock where the Bruce planted his standard, we lived again that day in 1314.

"You know," said our guide, "the famous British square was first employed here by the Bruce. Front rank kneeling, second rank standing, to form a wall of steel. Officially, it was last used in the Sudan. Personally, I can say we used it at Mons in 1914. We had to . . . I was the only man in my company who got out of there uninjured."

Thus in one swift sentence he bridged the gap of six centuries from Bannockburn to Mons. Inevitably, we asked his regiment. He answered with a pride that is his heritage by the record of that regiment for two hundred years:

"The Black Watch."

Then, with a jerk, "Well, to return to *this* battle, and he continued his story. But the sense of reality was gone. Robert Bruce yielded to the soldier of the Black Watch. Later he said,

"I was at Gallipoli too. That was the worst place I ever was in. Not a wash or a shave for seven weeks. I only saw bread twice from April to December. Men died of illness by the hundreds. . . I've often been tired in my life, but—Yes, I was glad to get wounded and get out of it."

Once more with an effort he remembered Robert Bruce.

He had himself in action helped to make history; yet the bare need of food and shelter have forced him to bring to life in words the phantoms of history. His wages can be only the smallest pittance, and his tips, even if generous, must be few. Once he lived free in his native Highlands; then he gave his youth, his strength, his happiness, all but his life, for his country; and now he exists from day to day, recalling with bitter pride that he was a soldier of the Black Watch.

But he is more fortunate than hundreds of his comrades who number among Britain's million unemployed. They are everywhere present—destitute, unkempt, maimed, halt and blind. They wander aimlessly on every populous street in London. Barred by their disability from obtaining work, they must resort even to begging in order to live. Some manage to sell an occasional bunch of violets to a passing tourist. Some, ashamed openly to beg, hold out pencils or shoe laces, knowing that no one will buy, but hoping that someone will give them a few coppers. In the more crowded thoroughfares, some of them pick at banjos or scrape away at violins. We saw three together one day on Bond Street—a man with one arm grinding a hand organ, a blind man with a fine tenor voice singing "Sole Mio", and a man with one leg passing the hat. At the corner of Pall Mall and Regent Street sits a shell shocked veteran who paints garish landscapes on the pavement. He had to obtain permission for this from the government from whom also he receives a pension that barely pays his rent—and he has a wife and four children. Sometimes, among his pictures appears a crude black cat for luck, or an appeal scrawled in chalk—"You will never lose by showing a kind heart."

One morning we were watching the change of guard at St. James' Palace. As the troops lined up in the courtyard, a voice addressed us.

"You see the color-bearer walking up and down, and the captain with him? Well, that's a tradition of the guards. At the siege of — when all the men were killed or wounded, except a few officers and the color-bearer, they walked up and down on the rampart to make the enemy think the fort was still garrisoned."

We turned from the spectacle before us to look at the

speaker. He was dressed in a suit of which the coat and trousers did not match. In his left hand he held a cigarette; his right was thrust in his pocket, and the arm, held close against his side, appeared strangely shrunken. There were deep lines about his mouth, and now and then he closed his eyes as he talked. He spoke with an easy grace of expression that bore witness of unusual culture.

He had won our attention at once by his explanation of a ceremony that to us had hitherto been meaningless. Now he continued, "Whenever you see a wreath on the colors, it means the anniversary of a victory for the regiment."

The strains of a Sousa's march blared loudly in the sudden hush of motionless traffic. "Ah! Here they come," he said, turning with a light in his eyes as the Scots Guard band swung into view. In their scarlet coats and fur busbies, every man over five feet ten, these Guards regiments are the most magnificent troops in the world. But somehow, beside this shabbily dressed man with his crumpled arm, they seemed unreal, mere wooden soldiers in a toy parade.

When it was all over, he asked: "Would you like to see where the Prince of Wales lives?" So it happened that in the next hour we went with him from the Palace down the Mall to Whitehall. Along the way he pointed out monuments and buildings, coloring his information with glamorous details of tradition and anecdote, till we stood in the shadow of the massive piles that represent the nerve center of the Empire, built to stand and fall with the Empire. At length, emerging from the unpretentious dinginess of Downing Street, we left him on the busy corner in front of the Abbey. He moved slowly away into the crowd as one who has no incentive for haste, no destination for his aimless footsteps, more tragic than all his fellow-sufferers; for by birth and culture he was prepared to walk with his feet upon the hills; but circumstance has compelled him to share the lot of beggars who must live by charity.

In Westminster Abbey, the Unknown Warrior sleeps among the illustrious of the nation. Nearby in Whitehall, men bare their heads before the wreath-banked Cenotaph to "The Glorious Dead." In one brief moment life was demanded of them. They scarce had time to question or to

mourn the end of dreams they had cherished in days remote and tranquil. All thought was refined, all desire purified in the flame of sacrifice. They died swiftly, unfalteringly, with steadfast courage, passed beyond all doubt and pain, and are at peace again.

But these others, their living comrades, what has been their sacrifice? They too offered life, but it was spared to them only that they might be seared by years of agony. They were to know no longer what had once been part and parcel of their daily lives:—the light of friendly faces; the joy of striding free over the hills of home; the clasp of greeting or farewell; the harmony of relaxed body and untroubled mind. Rather, they yielded up all that was theirs save life. Their strength, their happiness, their youth.

Ten years after peace has come to their war-torn country, it has not come to them. Poverty has quenched their youth in middle age; has clothed their bodies in tattered garments; has stifled their pride and self-respect; and has made them the objects of pity of a nation itself too poor to help them. Their life is sunk to a sordid struggle for an existence which they cannot value; and the future is lit by no flickering torch of hope, but, rather, deeper shrouded in despair. For as the years pass, even pity, so poignant toward a man wrecked in the prime of life, grows sluggish towards that same man when his long life is nearly spent.

So, while their comrades sleep in glory, they must live hour by hour with a resignation that has ceased to be despair, till at last Death comes to claim the shattered life that he refused when it was offered in the fulness of youth.


TO A FENCER

NANCY WYNNE PARKER

This is lean grace.
Your uncoiling lunge
Is a greyhound that passes,
A swirl of wind outlined by quirks of silver.
But you are suddenly stopped, caught, angled.
You are a thing of daylight.
Daylight mounds on your bare arms and chest,
Waits fierce on your cheek's flattened curve,
Smites from the lid-gripped cold of your eyes.
In the grass
Clear grapes hung cool from the temples of slim dancers
Before you came.
Swords weave, curve—echo—
It is a bird your fingers hold against your steadied hand—
A bird with a cry in its throat.
I know a meadow lark along whose song
Daylight slithers as cruelly.
I have been stabbed by things hunched spiderlike,
Half-choked by tremendous bulging knuckles of the brutes.
Known the shattering darkness after bullets,
But only song can pass slim torture through my soul. . . .
This is grace flayed of slow curves
Death laughing.

RETURN

ERNESTINE GILBRETH

VENING came gently. The pine trees rustled and trembled in the breeze. Far off in the distance sounded the muffled cries of frogs. Tiny ripples fluttered back and forth over the lake.

On shore the bonfire crackled and burst into flame. Now the first chords of the organ sounded; the voices rose in chorus, swelling out over the water, ringing back from the cove. The sunset had faded until only a blur of pink stained the sky. The world was hushed, lulled in beauty.

The hymns followed one upon another, mingling with the ripple of the water, the rustle of the trees. Long flames darting from the bonfire, illuminated the rows of faces. Silence came completely, wiping away the distinctness of reality. Then sighing like a distant wind, louder, gaining strength and volume, sounded the first spiritual. "We are climbing Jacob's ladder—we are climbing—" The notes soared higher and higher, tense and shrill with emotion. "Soldiers of the Cross". They faded, ending in a whisper. The negro singers stumbled away, their backs hunched and transparent in the firelight. The sky was darker now. Deep clouds rolled over it, blotting out the crystal of the sky. The moon appeared, yellow and waning, smiling down from a wealth of effulgent wrinkles.

They were drifting, breathing in the cool night air. Dan turned the canoe and started toward the cove. The service had begun to break up. People were rising from the benches; they scattered, melting into the darkness. Their voices echoed back from the road and were lost in the pines.

Instinctively she had dipped her hand into the water and felt the cool drops trickle away. The contact sent exquisite shivers up her arm. The Lake—it had been so for years, cool summer nights and moonlight, drifting silently until a yoo-hoo in the distance, meant time to come home. But this year there had been no need for calling; she was older now, able to judge for herself.

The past summers returned in swift, impressionistic flashes. There were the old friends, strangely real, haunting now because of their vitality. Fred had been tall and blonde-headed with glowing blue eyes. September had come quickly, leaving him miserable and pathetically lonely. He had sworn never to return. Why then, did his hearty laugh continue to resound through her memory? Others had come and gone too. Now they filled every turn of the road, lingered under each pine, smiled from the club-porch. The lake was alive with their voices. The springboard reverberating from a dive, recalled Woody, graceful as a girl, in spite of his massive build. Raising fierce black eyebrows, he had boasted of his wives, loudly preferring them "young and silent". Winning him from a determined blonde had been a matter of ease. But again September had come, descending swiftly, leaving no hope for resumption the following year. For summer affairs were momentary, pleasant while they lasted, leaving an after-taste not to be quickly forgotten. So Woody continued to dominate the spring-board, to fill the swimming dock with his shoulders, his quick, graceful motions.

People rarely returned to the lake; the crowd underwent a ceaseless change. Each summer left holes never quite filled, brought new faces smiling with an air of progressive possession from the club-porch, faces which sang new songs, whispered new jokes—faces to which one became reconciled in time. The former spontaneity and enthusiasm had disappeared; in their place were careful calculation and chartering, the application of technique. It mattered little that the lake remained as serenely beautiful, that the pine trees kept their stiff, relentless watch, that Sunday nights were illuminated with Song Service. These, the treasures of the past, had become mysteriously, imperceptibly transformed.

The drops trickled away from her fingers and were lost in the lake. So it was with memories. One raised them gently, only to watch them recede once more into their source. They were created from the past through the medium of one's mind. Inevitably they returned whence they had come. Why then should she remember, why should she unconsciously project past events into the present, weaving bright threads through a dull and colorless web? Life continued swiftly, surely. Foolish to mark time, to crane one's neck

backward like a reluctant puppy. Foolish—but when one did it instinctively.

A bat skimming past, brushed her cheek. Involuntarily she shivered with disgust. Reality. It was interrupting, like a bat. No, reality was about her, the moonlight, the lake, paddling toward the cove; material for dreams, yet actuality itself. And Dan! She glanced up at him, paddling with long silent strokes, at his shirt open at the neck, at the lean rugged features. He was whistling, half-smiling to himself. "Drifting and Dreaming!" How completely it fitted into her feelings! The lake—yes, Dan loved it too, its chill beauty, its jagged curves. The realization swept over her chokingly. Dan and she were alive, mutually appreciating, living in an exotic harmony of understanding.

Now they had reached the cove overhung with tangled branches, damp and sweet smelling. The canoe bumped against a dead root and lay drifting. Dan had put down his paddle. Still whistling, he lit a cigarette. She glanced up at him swiftly—at the hair blowing back from his temples, that half-quizzical smile.

Was she unconsciously making notes, hoarding the very essence of future memories?

* * * * *

A year had passed. Strange that it should be Sunday night again. The intervening winter and spring were completely obliterated; summer had become everlasting.

Again they were drifting silently, listening to the hymns following one upon another, the spirituals rising and fading into nothingness. She was a year older now, a year older—and Dan had come back. Dan had come *back*! For the first time fate had sanctioned a continuance from summer to summer. The thread had been permitted to remain unbroken; memories and actualities existed on the same plane, could no longer be separated.

He had appeared one morning, smiling eagerly from his broad height, shaking hands with the old vigor. His presence surprised, hurt her beyond endurance. "Tonight. There'll be a song-service tonight! I'll get a canoe if it means stealing." It was impossible to repel his pleading. "Last year—do you remember last year?" Certainly she remembered, but now his proximity rang a sudden hideous discord, vibrated through her mercilessly.

Sunday night! There had been no chance to refuse, no time to think, to adjust oneself to the facts. Reality and phantasy. Where and how to differentiate! Dan had returned to life, to the lake, miraculously, disappointingly. Now glancing at him, her memories conflicted, struck on all sides, always to his disadvantage.

How perfectly she had recalled him during those intervening winter days, his hair blowing in the wind, whistling to himself. But now he was paddling. She could hear the water gurgling under the canoe. And suddenly she was frightened, by his nearness, by the healthy ring of his voice, by her utter inability to escape.

"Drifting and Dreaming". It was fate which made him whistle that tune recalling sensations and impressions that could only hurt. No, this was not Dan, this masquerader sporting his air of proprietorship, trying to rekindle the old memories, to relive them once more. By his very presence he was sweeping away a world dim and beautiful with idealism, he was—

Something was breathless, caught and choked within her. Dissappointment, crumpling illusions, these were there. But her whole philosophy, the unconscious appreciation of life itself, faded and died before her eyes. So she had been merely amusing herself, dressing and painting life into something dead and embalmed? How naive to try to breathe life into what was already gone! Unsuspectingly Dan had refused her ornaments, calmly brushed them aside. Should she not appreciate—but a larger emotion swept over her, hatred for his clumsiness, his thoughtlessness, hatred for life itself.

The illusions had been brushed down in a single stroke. The gaudy coverings of imagination once stripped off, left the past revealed for what it was, a mummy a hideous dust.

It was of no significance that a bat flew by, skimming flatly over the water, that Dan was whistling and raising the paddle up and down, up and down. She had dipped her hand into the water, delighting to wince at the painful sensation it produced, at the drops falling silently, completely, back into the lake.



EDITORIAL

IT happens not infrequently to ladies of the arts. Take almost any popular actress. She had all the hard work of establishing herself, once; or even farther back, of picking up stage tricks while earning a living. Later she flushed to the applause of her first triumph; and still later, having become fashionable, she played to houses of people who would not dare to admit they had not seen her. Those are the prosperous times; then the actress becomes aristocratic and even haughty; she spends money freely; her position seems enviable. But before she knows it her public come only out of habit; then, there is a newer star; then all at once her engagements thin out, and in a few years more she has to beg for a place. She is likely to wonder, then, how anybody can do without her; surely there must be a mistake! But the rejections hammer at her self-respect until it is mashed out thin and brittle; and she begins to think it would be queer for anybody to want her. (Though there are always the old friends—sentimentalists, probably; they still remember her, years ago.) So she might go on indefinitely, and even starve somewhere in a garret, if the old friends did not come to her rescue; start a new fashion for her; pull wires and take season seats for her, and presently bring her forth, renovated, into a more dependable spotlight.

It wasn't much use for her to act well, in that slump, when people were out for style. One needs a public.

So I'm not any exception, thought Monthly, facing her thirty-seventh season; but poverty, even common-place, feels night-marish. And she began to plan to economize; she would sell her house, and much of her furniture, keeping only the finest pieces, though they seemed less showy than her old crowded rooms. No exception. . . And I must cut down on

dress, too, just this year; I may have been extravagant. And there are so many things one wears that never show. . . (She blushed; all her friends wore lace from the skin out; she had believed such thorough finery was the mark of a lady.) But something must be given up. Plain underthings. Nobody ever saw her Editorial, for instance; they expected one somewhere underneath; but they would be embarrassed to have to look at it. Well, she would leave off the Editorial, and the lace; and her clothes should be severe now. (But if I had some good friends, they might revive me, and then, gradually, I would reinstate myself.)

All of this, she thought, was natural. Shabby-gentility. But when she found that her influential friends were working for her after all—making public opinion swing back her way, she tossed her head in relief, feeling awakened from an exhausting night of dreams; she splashed cold water on her face; sniffed salts, and then dashed eau de cologne under her nose; built her hair high; put on her Editorial for the last time that season, and walked out respectably at last, thanking her stars for the kind public. The first appearance of the season! Her mood was genial. Tomorrow, she promised herself, nonsense should cease; she would catch up for lost time, she would exercise her art; she would captivate them. Today in full regalia, (including Editorial) she would pay calls, and thank these patrons.

EIGHT-O

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BOOK REVIEWS



BAMBI (A Life in the Woods)

FELIX SALTEN

Translated from the German by Whittaker Chambers—

Simon and Schuster 1928

“Bambi came into the world in the middle of the thicket, in one of those little hidden forest glades which seem to be entirely open, but are really screened in on all sides.” “He stood there swaying unsteadily on his thin legs and staring vaguely in front of him with clouded eyes that saw nothing.” In this fashion Felix Salten begins the story of Bambi’s “life in the woods.”

The writer is interested in Bambi as a personality, and takes keen pleasure in describing his first vibrating sensations, his fears and joys, the childish naiveté so soon to be replaced by stern calmness. With treatment as poetic and sensitive as it is exact and simple, he describes Bambi’s experiences in the forest, his rapid accumulation of knowledge. The relationship of the fawn to his mother and to Faline is carefully indicated. But more delicate is the bond existing between Bambi and “the old Prince.” Salten has managed it, by the use of restraint and of consistently skillful suggestion. The aged deer who knows the secrets of the forest and teaches “the vital need of being alone”, remains indeed the personification of nobility, wisdom and courage.

Nature pervades the book. Poetic descriptions of the forest reverberating with life, produce a striking combination of beauty and reality. One lives keenly, while the days pass and the seasons merge silently into one another. There is summer with the forest sweltering under a scorching sun. “Over the meadows and treetops the air quivered in glassy transparent ripples as it does over a flame.” Similes and metaphors quiver from every line. “The forest lay as though

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hurt by the blinding sun." But winter wipes away all memory of warmth. The trees stand "as though violated, their bodies naked for all to see. And they lifted their bare brown limbs to the sky for pity."

Bambi, Friend Hare, and the other unforgettable characters, speak easily in human dialogue. They are always charmingly consistent. Even the tiny midge-buzzings are peculiarly midge-like. Or as winter approaches one may over hear two leaves speaking for the last time.

"Have I changed much?" asked the second leaf shyly but determinedly.

"Not in the least," the first leaf assured her. "You only think so because I've got to be so yellow and ugly. But it's different in your case." And then a little later. "You're as lovely as the day you were born. Here and there may be a little yellow spot but it's hardly noticeable and only makes you handsomer, believe me."

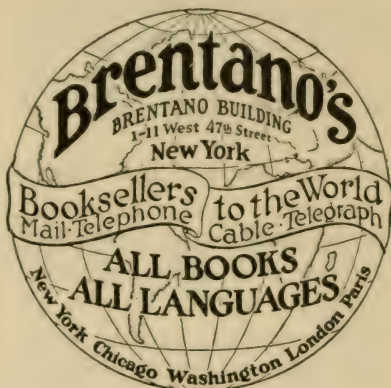
Equally skillful is the relationship of the people of the forest to their most deadly enemy "Him". "The old Prince" is able to draw a lesson from a dead hunter. "He's just the same as we are. He has the same fears, the same needs, and suffers in the same way." Bambi listening, was inspired and said trembling. "There is Another who is over all, over us and over Him". But to most of the animals "Him" remains "A wave of scent blowing past, filling their nostrils, numbing their senses, making their hearts stop beating." A creature standing remarkably erect." It was extremely thin and had a pale face entirely bare around the nose and eyes. A kind of dread emanated from that face, a cold terror."

The reader loses himself, forgets his own world. Utterly free, he roams the forest, smelling the fragrant glasses, delighting in the touch of cool moist winds. With a new understanding, a more sensitive appreciation, he listens to the midge-buzzings, senses the trembling of a hare. Heart pounding, he dares the sunlit meadows--with Bambi.

E. M. G.

"THE MAGNIFICENT IDLER" CAMERON ROGERS
Doubleday Page and Co. 1926.

To those who find their own setting unexhilarating or negligible, there is a vicarious excitement to be derived from exploring the eccentricities, particularly the moral deviations,



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of others. This impoverished curiosity frequently involves an irresistible desire to draw to itself, by its loud remark, the attention and interest of an unheeding world. Needless to say, for these people, the distinction between the actually immoral and the merely complex or rare personality is too delicate. A biography of Walt Whitman would seem to offer the most remarkable opportunity to that type of critic who is preoccupied with eroticism, with high-colored sensuality, and it is, therefore, the more unexpected and exhilarating to find temperate criticism, intelligent and palatable, unlike so much contemporary writing engaged in exhuming the decently buried. Cameron Rogers has written fearlessly, maturely, and with great humor, on the life of one of the notorious and little known men of recent literature. The biography tries to explain the emergence of so striking and profound a poet from an inarticulate background. Walt Whitman's poetry was, in a peculiar sense, borne of his life, shaped in his suffering. Without literary guidance, hampered by an initial lack of taste and a damaging facility, he was faced with the necessity of creating an entirely new medium which could give to his great unwieldy thought, sufficient clarity, sufficient beauty; the very nature of his thought made it impossible to utilize created forms.

As a child he loved trees and the sea, passionately. Later when the Whitmans moved to the city he transferred his absorbing interest to people, watching them, considering their multiple relations, liking them. He read widely, thought through long hours of idleness, and turned to people again. There is an unusual emphasis on his childhood and Cameron Rogers makes him a very engaging child, lonely and abstracted, but vitally concerned with everything surrounding him. As he grew older he turned journalist, finding to his immense satisfaction that words came easily to him. During this he wrote morose little tragedies, weighted with morals, which he admired and respected to a large extent. His mother, Louisa, met his literary productions with some reserve. She was a "skilled and experienced cook and her bread and her biscuits were perfectly leavened masterpieces. She sensed a certain soggianness in Walt's performance in his different field and in a homely flash of imagination, she visualized his little writings as muffins. . . whose unwholesome heaviness became neither their size nor their significance as nourishment." Walt

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FLOWERS

lacked the yeoman qualities of his ancestors; he bewildered his family and harassed his employers who could not appreciate his substitution of long periods of meditation for the consistent and productive effort they demanded. He was hugely mercurial, driven here and there by an overwhelming energy of the imagination. His idleness possessed an elemental quality which impressed even his associates who did his work.

As the life goes on Cameron Rogers writes with increasing insight. The account is one that would have pleased Walt Whitman. It is quite without sentimentality, original and comprehending. The unsophisticated conceit of the man, his pleasure in his published work, that writing which had cost him such agony, his simple amazement at the violent criticism which thundered over and around him, are written down in perfect understanding. After months of severe work, all his nonchalance and easiness gone, he had finished the manuscript of "Leaves Of Grass". He had given up his various interests in journalism, in printing, in publishing, to devote himself to writing a book which should express his own essence and the truth he knew. On its completion he went to the "northeastern shore of Long Island to read it in its entirety. He was so excited that he kept his hand upon it in his pocket lest by some malison of chance it disappear, lost, dropped as he walk, to disintegrate again into the soil from which, assuredly it had come." He read and in agony saw his failure. What he had striven to express was still locked in him and his poems said nothing. "Leave of Grass" left his hand in fluttering, slanting flight and met the sea." Then the long struggle began again, against the formalism that bound him, until he could be fully and artistically articulate. The sixth manuscript reached the publishers. The story of its appearance and the instant clamor that assailed it, is too well known to need repetition.

Cameron Rogers, with extraordinary subtlety, withdraws the figure of Whitman further and further from actuality as the book reaches its last chapters. The legend that shadows the decline of a great man, gathers closely about him, his enormous vitality lessens and the entire tonal quality of the writing follows its decrease. As he was less the poet and more an unseparated part of humanity towards his death, the impression of a great human being grows increasingly as

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his presence, his power declines in weakness. There is a sense of intimacy, a friendless and a kind of gratitude, as the book ends.

R. G.

MARIE GRUBBE

JENS PETER JACOBSEN

Alfred A Knopf 1925

The increasing interest in Scandinavian literature in the past fifteen years has been both the cause and the result of the translation into English of several valuable works by comparatively recent authors. Alfred A. Knopf has published a series of which perhaps the most widely known are Hamsun and Undset. The latter, in the trilogy "*Kristin Lavransdatter*", has accomplished the difficult fusion of a manner of life which is past with the motion of life which is present. Kristin and Erlend are dominant, absorbing personalities, not bound by years or periods in spite of their entire and intimate participation in the customs of fourteenth century Norway. In "*Marie Grubbe*", lately produced by Knopf, history has not been joined to the present so definitively. Were it not for "*Kristin Lavransdatter*" one might say that the realistic effect of a story necessarily is damaged by translation, adequate though the translator may be; but Undset's work precludes this explanation.

It is curious that "*Marie Grubbe*", a book potentially so powerful, should give the impression of being twice removed from actuality. It seems to be the story of a story rather than the story of a life, its historical basis to the contrary. Seventeenth century life is more convincing as it is presented in the old Danish histories. Jacobsen consumed volumes of them in the Royal Library in preparation for his writing. He says in a letter in 1873, "... I read old documents and letters and lies and descriptions of murder, adultery, corn rates, whore mongery, market prices, gardening, the siege of Copenhagen, divorce proceedings, christenings, estate registers, genealogies, and funeral sermons. All this is to become a wonderful novel to be called "*Mistress Marie Grubbe. Interiors of the Seventeenth Century.*" Most of these pastimes do discover a speaking acquaintance in the book. Mistress Marie, socially insignificant but aspiring and romantic, marries into importance through Ulrik Frederick, the King's natural son.

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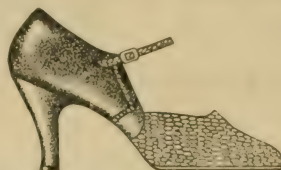
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He is the first of three men to whom she is successively bound. Each has a simple one-sided nature which is compelling to Marie until she discovers its weakness empirically with much tribulation. Sti Høgh, who for variety is paramour instead of husband, fascinates her by a melancholy voluptuousness, and Søren, the peasant serving in her father's house to which she returns after breaking with Sti, has the brutal strength to override her. Together they are driven out, and she ends her life in plain garments and a tawdry brocaded cap as Søren the Ferryman's Marie. This emphasis on her dress is an instance of the frequent use which the author makes of the indirect method of approach to his characters,—a device which he managed with considerable subtlety. Jacobsen says that with Søren she was happy, but her contentment is not persuasive. It is true that when she is alone throughout the book she flashes into tangibility. When incidents crowd closely her personality fades until they seem only dissolving visions of her own imagination.

Though it is plausible to venture a criticism of the characters in a foreign book, it is nearly impossible to judge the style, the excellency of which is a matter of convention. Jacobsen was a stylistic innovator in Danish. He admired "the luxuriant glowing picture." Reading "Marie Grubbe" in English is like trying to determine the whole significance of a quotation out of its proper context. The scholarly care the author exercised in supplying details peculiar to the century, the people, or their surroundings sometimes contributes to realistic effect, sometimes stultifies it. Overrichness in style corresponds to the lack of balance in handling which makes him introduce chapters about the besieged Copenhagen populace which behaves quite like any other mob and adds nothing to the progress of the novel. He has an extraordinary feeling for flowers and flower settings. There is ease in his descriptions and a facility which brings the prose near poetry. This is most evident in the long fire passage; "Warm and pleasant and luminous the breath of the fire streamed through the little room. Like a fluttering fan of light it played over the parquet floor and chased the peaceful dusk which hid in tremulous shadows to right and left behind twisted chair-legs, or shrank into corners, lay thin and long in the shelter of mouldings. . ." If Jacobsen had been as interested in construction and characterization throughout the

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book as he was in aesthetic writing in which he was strongest, over-emphasis would not have struggled with mere outline.

S. S. S.

COWBOY

ROSS SANTEE

Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1928

I realize that in undertaking this review, I am opening myself to criticism on the grounds that I am neglecting for it other more outstanding pieces of literature, books which will receive more praise and more discussion. I doubt whether this book will go beyond two or possibly three editions because it will appeal to the minority of the reading public. But I am ready to make a firm stand in its defense.

From its title the general nature of the book is obvious, and might well prejudice a perspective reader who has long since been thoroughly disillusioned in the literature of the west. The west has been capitalized for a good many years by writers of little merit and less knowledge. We have had "The Virginian" which has become an American classic, a few obscure stories by Bret Harte and Hamlin Garland, and, more recently, by Will James—"Cowboys North and South" and two companion volumes of authentic stories and sketches. But the rest of the western novels have been, on the whole, justly named "trash". Their aim is sensational action, with the result that they only occasionally achieve truth of detail and actual characterization or atmosphere. There are exceptions that I might make, but I am speaking generally.

We have seen recently that excellent novels can be written on the Middle West and its pioneers. We have yet to see a novelist do full justice to the ranch country and to the men who spend so much of their lives alone with cattle and horses. These men have been misrepresented. They have been typified in a romantic diffuse glow, and have lost their sturdy flame of reality. They deserve as much attention as the middle western farmer has received for they too have suffered hardships and have struggled against the forces of an implacable nature. The two-gun cowboy and bandit of cheap novels has crowded out the hard working cow-hand, the camp cook, the flunky. The wrangler who rises in the black hours before dawn to run the horses in, the peeler who faces death every time he mounts an unbroken horse. The vigorous drama of

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the lives of these men has been sacrificed for exaggerated flashy tales manufactured to thrill jaded readers.

But Ross Santee in "Cowboy" has achieved a veracity and simplicity which are highly commendable in themselves. The people, the horses and the manner of life have been learned through his own experience as a cowboy, and he does not make any attempt to romanticize them. The unity of the book is maintained by the determination of a small boy from an east Texas farm, to become a cowboy. Button is not remarkable in any way, except for his stubborn courage. His rise from fifteen dollars a month, milking cows and feeding the chickens, to the glorious position of "brone-peeler" is told humourously and with keen sympathy. Button is boy enough to have his day of conceit over his riding ability, (quickly taken out of him by one small black horse); and boy enough to worship Mack, the silent but friendly cowpuncher at McDougal's ranch. His joy when he is set to work breaking colts, his pride over a new saddle, his intense excitement when he rode into town for Christmas for the first time, on a "big roan brone,"—these touches open up the wistful heart of a boy trying to realize his ideal.

The humour is the keen spontaneous humour of a westerner who jests over the greatest difficulties of his life and grumbles over the trifling discomforts. It is a rough humour, always ready in any emergency, and expressed in a quick figurative language. Comedy is balanced with tragedy, although the latter is treated with the philosophical impassivity which a cowboy learns. For them it is all in the run of things that the day should come when "old man Grimes" would be too old to lead his roundup, and that Mack should find a swift death beneath a falling horse, alone in a horse camp. The whole book is very real and very moving in its absolute sincerity. It is written in the concise and vivid vernacular of a cowpuncher, from Button's naive viewpoint. The descriptions are done with brief suggestion—

"We'd crawl out with the morning star. Our boot heels poppin' on the kitchen floor before it started breakin' light. You could tell who each puncher was by the jingle of his spurs." or—

"At McDougal's we always kept a brone to wrangle on; an' that always meant a show, for the pony had been standing out all night, an' them nights got pretty cold. He'd always

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have a hump in his back when you laced the saddle on, an' most of them had to be thrown and tied down before I could get on. That hour before daylight was always the lowest time for me, when I didn't have no coffee in my paunch before I started out. After the sun gets up awhile, a horse don't look so mean, but to hear one snort when you walk up to him while its still dark, especially if he's got rollers in his nose, always sent a chill through me. But no matter how cold the mornin' was, by the time I'd saddled an' crawled a brone I'd be circulatin' good."

Button should be allowed to make his own stand and to tell his own story. I only hope that I have in some way indicated the excellences of a book, little heralded in its arrival upon the market. It is high time the west be given its due praise, and Ross Santee, although he has not written a best seller or a prize winning novel, has told the truth about the ranching country. He has written with a passionate honesty as though he felt that the friends of his cowboy life had too long been falsely painted. I recommend "Cowboy" both to those who know the west and to those who do not. If given a fair chance, it will enlighten many and do a great deal to remove the heavy prejudice against western novels.

E. B.

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CAROLINE AND DIANA

ELIZABETH PERKINS



IN 1830 there appeared in London society an unusually gifted and beautiful lady. Her husband, the witty, gifted, and particularly efficient Tom Sheridan, having died while in the service of the Crown, the Crown had presented her with a modest dwelling-place whither Polite Society soon learned to turn when in need of social intercourse at once intelligent and amusing. For the lady, in addition to her other admirable attributes, was possessed of three daughters whom, Polite Society insisted, one could not have believed to belong to one who appeared so young, had not her beauty and brilliance appeared to an unmistakable degree in them also. "Georgy" was perhaps the most strikingly handsome of the three, and "Cary" was considered the wit; but each of the sisters was an addition to the society which was quick to realize the fact. Wherever they went they were expected to be an ornament to the assembly, the life of the party; and they generally were. Polite Society called them "The Three Graces."

It was hardly to be expected that any one of the Three Graces would remain long unsought or unwed. "Georgy" and Helen became respectively the Duchess of Somerset and Lady Dufferin; the ladies were handsome, witty, and withal womanly; the marriages were quite suitable; Polite Society saw nothing of which to disapprove. But when Caroline, alike the most gifted and the most impulsive, married the Hon. George Chapple Norton, in whose character and social attributes the casual observer at least could discern nothing

worthy of note except the possibility of his succeeding to a title, murmurs were heard. Who was this Norton? Caroline Sheridan, only nineteen, whose brilliance was already proverbial, whose promising literary career had already begun—what hidden merits had she seen in this apparently uncommendable man? Society soon had an opportunity of judging for itself; and its decision was not in favor of the object of investigation. He was pronounced a bore of “a coarse nature and violent temper;” one writer states that he spent his time in “taking pills and spinning conversation out of his own bowels;” Maurois succinctly characterizes him as “son odieux mari.” He was unpopular from the start; without the most rudimentary social gifts, he was equally lacking in the means of supporting his wife—or himself. It is probable that he exerted as little effort to acquire the one as the other. Certainly, amidst the pecuniary difficulties which soon beset them, he seemed to sense nothing unworthy in the fact that his wife’s writings earned the money which maintained their household. She was, at this time, as she continued to be throughout her life, a popular editor of and contributor to the literary journals of the day, which thrived by a type of writing to which her talent was exactly suited. Her first book of poetry appeared only a short while after her marriage. Meanwhile she kept up as best she could the social life, the constant entertaining which seemed almost essential to her nature. It is significant that the diarists of the time seldom if ever mention Mr. Norton in this connection. They had gone to a reception at Mrs. Norton’s, or Mrs. Norton had been among those present; or they had just heard of Mrs. Norton’s latest witticism. Probably Mr. Norton remained in the home his wife provided for him, and partook of pills. Society was at a loss to account for the marriage. Three children were born to the couple; still their relations were uncordial and yet without an open break. The puzzle became more and more inexplicable.

But the difficulties seemed to be lessened in one way at least. Lord Melbourne, a devoted friend of “poor dear Tom Sheridan,” found a government position for Norton, which rendered the struggle of Debit and Credit not quite so one-sided. Unfortunately, Lord Melbourne at the same time discovered in the lovely Mrs. Norton a woman who was both intelligent and charming; their tastes were in many ways

congenial; he met interesting and useful people at her select gatherings. He began to make his appearance quite regularly at Mrs. Norton's assemblies; he developed a custom of dropping in late at Mrs. Norton's after long sessions of Parliament. This is all that was definitely known; out the low and disinterested murmur which had persisted since the marriage grew to a more menacing roar punctuated by sharp yelpings; stories flew, and in their flight became huge and distorted. The apparently phlegmatic Mr. Norton suddenly brought suit for divorce, naming Lord Melbourne as co-respondent.

Polite Society and Politics were electrified. Greville writes (May 11, 1836): "Great talk about Lord Melbourne's affair with Mrs. Norton, which if it is not quashed will be inconvenient. John Bull fancies himself vastly moral and the court is mighty prudish, and between them our off-hand Premier will find himself in a ticklish position. . . People rather doubt the action coming on. . . the Tories will fall on the individual from party violence, the Radicals on his class from hatred to the aristocracy,"

This last sentence suggests the thought which was uppermost in the saner and less malevolent minds; that some urging of the Opposition was behind Mr. Norton's action. Certainly when the trial came on, the greatest wonder was how anyone whose case was so absolutely unsupported could have considered bringing suit. The trial was a farce; the jury found in favor of the defendant.

The trials of Mrs. Norton, however, were by no means over. Attempting reconciliation, she was repulsed; and her husband, according to the incredible laws of the time, could—and did—refuse her money and the custody, even the sight, of her children. In one connection or another her name was forever being bandied about; she was finally even accused of having sold to the Times a political secret confided to her by one of her admirers—a charge which was investigated and refuted only some years after her death. Throughout the bitter years of her notoriety as a woman, she was building up her fame as a writer and a wit. She seemed to inspire in her true friends a degree of devotion which now appears almost ridiculous. Janet Ross writes: "My mother had taken up (Mrs. Norton's) cause against her husband so warmly that she refused every invitation to great London houses to which

her friend was not asked." Wherever she went she was the center of attention. Her cleverness was possibly a trifle cheapened by the strain now put upon it; for "her position in society was to a great degree imperilled" and must be preserved at all costs. Even Mrs. Ross, one of her fondest admirers, says: "I always thought she was more agreeable and brilliant when we were alone or 'en petit comité' than when there were many people; then she sometime posed and seemed to try and startle her hearers". She wrote continually: many poems which despite their uniformity of subject-matter, their sentimentality, and the faithful rhyming of "love" with "above," "water" with "daughter," "tear" with "bier," seem to have a basic sincerity; longer and more purposeful poems which brought out the weak points of her talent; novels; and a long stream of personal letters and formal articles setting forth the injustice of the existing laws for women and pleading for changes in them.

Critics differ as to which was her most important type of writing. Horne says simply, "the writing of Mrs. Norton breathes melodious complaints over the desecrations of her sex's loveliness," and the shepherd of "*Noctes Ambrosianae*" is of much the same opinion. "Chastity knows her ain sacred character, and when inspired by genius, isn't she a touchin' Muse!" Arthur Arnold, on the other hand, declares: "The most distinguished literary woman of her time. . . her style was not employed in its perfection to protest against any other wrongs than those which had pierced her own heart." She made no claim to equality before the law, saying: "the wild and stupid theories advanced by a few women of equal rights and equal intelligence are not the opinions of their sex. I for one believe in the superiority of man as I do in the existence of a God." What she wanted was "protection," and she struggled valiantly for it. If she indeed felt that her main purpose was to secure changes in existing laws, it must be confessed that she used her personal charm and power of gaining sympathy to obtain her ends. Her letters are all couched in the most personal terms: "There is a bill now before the House in which circumstances have taught me to take a deep and painful interest". "What I suffered respecting those children, God knows, and He only." "I bless God that at least mine was one of the cases which called attention to the law as it then existed."

Occupied with her work, eagerly sought after by her friends, harassed by troubles with her husband, for over forty years she lived a busy and worried life. At length her husband died and most of her notoriety perished with him; before her own death she had a few months of tranquil happiness, married to Sir William Stirling Maxwell, a loving friend of many years' standing.

Such was the life of the woman whose death occurred only a few years before the writing of "*Diana of the Crossways*." In treating of one whose life had in it so much that was intrinsically dramatic, and whose name and history a few years before had been on everyone's lips, Meredith chose a subject sure to be of interest to his contemporaries; but to make the novel interesting without regard to its basis in fact, he had in the main a fourfold task: to explain the marriage, to explain the initial scandal, to explain the betrayal of the political secret, and to provide a more satisfactory finale. Each of these questions involves of course numerous minor explanations and changes, but these on the whole constituted Meredith's problem.

The incredible marriage is his first concern. He begins by making his Diana a singularly unattached figure: possessed of a few close friends but apparently with no past as a background except for a few shadowy experiences with these same friends, and of no parents, guardians, or beautiful sisters. Then he makes her devastatingly beautiful and clever, painfully clever; (although one can never be sure how much of her discourse is Diana; all Meredith's characters speak and think in Meredithian, and it is difficult to strain out their own ideas.) The natural result of so much unprotected loveliness is a series of unfortunate attentions from amorous gentlemen. She feels a sense of inferiority to men, a need of support strongly reminiscent of her prototype. Accordingly, upset by one final experience with the husband of her dearest friend, she accepts, as a refuge, marriage with "one" Mr. Warwick. Unprotected feminine charm to disturbed feminine equanimity to headlong feminine rush for shelter.

The husband thus logically acquired, Meredith depicts not "of coarse nature and violent temper," but cold, humorless, polite, with "opinions in packets," totally lacking the spark essential to Diana. Diana's friends fear that some day she will "lose her relish for ridicule and see him at a dis-

tance." This is exactly what occurs; and, finding her husband incapable or undesirous of responding to her wit, she turns it against him. She feels stifled by the combination of his physical ascendancy and intellectual apathy; she gives vent to her feelings by ridiculing him not only when they are alone, but, sometimes only too openly, in public. On the other hand, in her friendship with the prominent politician Lord Dannisburgh—in which she later insists there was nothing more shameful than an occasional handclasp a shade too long, a glance a shade too sympathetic,—she finds the stimulus of intellectual compatibility and the pleasure derived from the admiration of an almost-disinterested friend. It is scarcely to be wondered at that Warwick, stung despite his apparent apathy by his wife's taunts, should be driven to a frenzy by the stage-whispering of society, and should take such drastic—although senseless—measures as he did.

The trial over, Diana's history for a time closely parallels that of Mrs. Norton, with one most important exception which, obscurely at first, paves the way for the "Happy Ending." One sees Diana going brazenly (her term) into society, exercising her arts and graces in behalf of her own good name—for, "when a woman's charm has won half the battle her character is an advancing standard;" one sees her keeping the wolf from the door with no weapon save her pen; "being clever," censuring herself for the occasional cheapness of her cleverness as a "drawing-room exotic." But her relations to her husband are totally changed from the original. There are no children of this marriage; and Diana, although considering herself "the first martyr of the modern woman's cause," is campaigning only for a vaguely defined "freedom and protection," which one suspects do not present themselves in any very clear form even to Diana herself. And in this instance it is the husband who sends repeated petitions for a reconciliation, the wife who with expressive gestures and overly-dramatic speeches publishes her refusal to consider any such project. And Mr. Warwick, instead of living on for forty-odd years, a constant source of anxiety and notoriety to his wife, dies after a conveniently brief passage of time, thus further clearing the way for the "happy ending."

Diana sets out, as has been said, to earn her living by her writing. Her success at first is enormous, but—differing again from Mrs. Norton—her powers of being as brainy and

as popular on paper as she is in conversation quickly decline, the sales on her books grow smaller. The wranglings of Debit and Credit which continually disturb the peace of her small but expensive household grow ever more bitter and more one-sided, with compromises less easily effected. Diana is without resources; Mr. Tonans, a newspaper editor to whom she has frequently given choice tid-bits of news, rallies her on the score of being "out of it;" she is forced to sell her beloved country home, The Crossways; to temporize; to seek cringingly from her publishers advance payment on a book which she feels sure she can never complete with any success. It is at this critical moment that Dacier, the rising young politician with whom only a coincidence a short time before has restrained her from eloping, confides in her a secret of state. Her vanity has been wounded by the accusation of her being "out of it"; her nerves are on edge from the now continuous howling of the wolf on the doorstep; and she is evidently quite unaware of the value of political secrets. Scarcely has her admirer left the house when she hails a late-prowling cab, drives to the office of Tonans and tells him what has just been confided to her. There is a vague mention of payment—nothing definite spoken, but large sums hinted at. She is quite unaware of the import of what she has done until Dacier himself informs her. Thus Meredith seeks to exculpate an action which in itself seems inexcusable.

Now for the "happy ending". Meredith's task here seems at first sight somewhat hopeless. Dacier utters in a few brief and pithy sentences his opinion of Diana, and almost immediately takes unto himself a fair, cold, very English, entirely suitable wife. Diana plays the broken reed very movingly for several chapters, and resigns herself to an unsatisfactory and loveless existence. Then appears once more as saviour of the situation the noble Redworth, who throughout Diana's career has played the part of faithful hound, loving more or less dumbly, rendering every service in his power, and several times unknowingly rescuing Diana, as she herself admits, when she was at the crossroads. This noble Redworth, the perfect type of "a good husband," seeks to make Diana his wife and to bring her the good solid comforts of home and family life which she has always lacked. Diana, experiencing again that feeling of friendlessness which was partly respon-

sible for her first matrimonial adventure, still shrinks from the worldly sacrament of marriage—yet she feels herself oppressed, driven, by custom, her helplessness and her apparent inability to manage her own life. To this are added the importunings of her dearest friend, who argues in the least commendable of ways—by pointing out the long and faithful service of the suitor, his manly bearing in the face of disappointment and the dog-like expression of his eyes. The weary Diana's last defense is worn down; she sees "a regiment of proverbs bearing placards instead of guns, and each one a taunt at women, especially at widows"... "Banality, thy name is marriage!" she cries with a last attempt at a gesture, and goes "forth to her commonplace fate". Here she is, all nicely married to the noble man whom Nature so evidently intended for her protection. Still the tone of the finale seems not quite satisfactory. Accordingly, in the last chapter, Diana is rather unaccountable "led to bloom with the nuptial sentiment," returns from her honeymoon in the mental state considered appropriate for a recent bride, and is speakingly silent, with an "involuntary little twitch of the fingers", in response to her dearest friend's sweet discourse of godchildren.

This is what Meredith has made of Mrs. Norton. One cannot help wondering whether he was as fond of his Diana at the completion of the work as he was at the beginning. While still engrossed in the novel, he wrote to Robert Louis Stevenson: "I am finishing at a great rate a two-volume novel partly modeled upon Mrs. Norton. I have had to endow her with brains and make them evidence to the discerning. I think she lives." This is all very well. Certainly her almost masculine brain was the basis alike of her finest wit, of her great popularity with certain people and corresponding dislike of her by others, and of the disastrous end of her first marriage. But Meredith as he advanced further into the story found much about his heroine which demanded explanation on other grounds than that of her brains. Surely the almost constant necessity for throwing an explanatory and flattering light on so many dubious actions must have become a source of vexation even to the tolerant and loving transcriber of these actions. Diana is a brilliant fascinating character, and a living being despite the extravagances of her story; but she is none the less remarkably exasperating. Almost everything she does shows her to be incurably romantic

and idealistic in attitude—or rather in that one of her attitudes which appears most often and most consistently. She is sentimental and given to dramatic attitudes, and like Mrs. Norton, she seems to inspire similar tendencies in her admirers. Thus we find Mr. Sullivan Smith, that ardent Hibernian, seeking duels on the slightest of pretexts, and several other gentlemen, ordinarily of perfectly sound mind, grandiloquently leaving their cards on journalists with intimations as to how much shall be published concerning Mrs. Warwick, or hunting down with grim zeal the perpetrators of each new story that crops up.

Meredith makes quite plausible Diana's precipitate rush into the impossible marriage; but still finds it difficult to approve of her subsequent treatment of her husband. Certainly she had genuine grievances against this parasitic creature who lived on her earnings; but her method of retaliation although it is made to account for a number of things, was mean and unworthy. And despite all Meredith's vivid description of Diana's later pecuniary difficulties, of her mental struggle and bewilderment, her betrayal of the political secret seems far from blameless. The plea made by the author through Diana's own words and thoughts—that of her ignorance of the secret's importance—quite loses its validity both through his own statement that he has endowed her with brains, and through her evident interest in and knowledge of politics.


The intricate arguments contrived by Meredith to reply to such objections must have cost him no little pains and annoyance; but these, after all, are personal objections raised by the reader. More important is the impossibility of making this one of Meredith's heroines correspond to his ideal of womanhood. Richard LeGallienne states that one of Meredith's main tenets was that of the union of body and spirit. "Woman's conventional" purity, and sentimental daintiness, are to him a dangerous superstition. . . 'love, what is that but a finer shoot of the tree stautly planted in good gross earth'. . . To love the flower and be ashamed of the root is a pitiable silliness in Mr. Meredith's eyes." Even in the novel "*Diana of the Crossways*" itself, he says "True poets and true women have the native sense of the divineness of what the world deems gross material substance." In this case, Diana can on the whole be considered no true woman. She is appalled at the thought of anything material being connected in

any way with what seems basically emotional or spiritual. "What if her poetic frenzy had not been of origin divine? had sprung from other than spiritual founts? had sprung from the reddened sources she was compelled to conceal?" The "physiological basis of passion" is to her a thing unthinkable. This conception of Diana's attitude grows on one from the beginning of the book, as though without the will or even the knowledge of the author. As the story draws to its close he seems suddenly to realize that his heroine does not come up to his standards, and makes a spasmodic effort to recover her position. He declares her reactions, both present and past, to be due to "chastity of spirit, not coldness of blood," and in the last few pages depicts her in possession of the quickly acquired traits of his womanly ideal. But this complete and almost instantaneous change fails to counteract the impression made by the rest of the tale of Diana; it seems to lack the ring of the genuine, and gives the effect of having been tacked on hastily—and too late.

One wonders if Meredith was, not only slightly displeased, but quite strongly surprised at the way his Diana turned out. The story of Mrs. Norton seemed to many, and probably to him, a dramatic one which without a great deal of tampering or exposition could be interpreted, made plausible, orderly, and heroic. He must have found that the amount of apology and argument necessary was far greater than had appeared. If he had omitted the last pages of the last chapter—a last vain attempt to capture the heroine he thought he had seen in Mrs. Norton—his story would have had the pattern he sought. By dint of much contortion and struggling he made his Diana's actions and reactions seem plausible—a wonderful feat; but in the process the woman herself was clearly shown to be far from heroic, far from ideal, and not at all the rationalized but idealized Mrs. Norton Meredith probably expected to create.

EDUCATION X

BARBARA DAMON SIMISON

OME day, perhaps—waiting in my attic room for fame to come to me, I shall be hungry. Unlike Elijah, the raven will avoid me, and even my sonnets to the sparrows will bring me no crumbs. Thus prematurely forced to burn the rejected manuscripts which are to do me no service, I shall finally sally forth in search of a job. I might become a parlour maid, and take up the art of dusting which I had abandoned so long ago. My delight in good food might make me invaluable as chief taster to a millionaire. But, before I think of any such occupation I shall be reminded of the college diploma in the bottom of my trunk. The allure of making myself mistress of a schoolroom will inveigle me into the teaching profession. Soon, however, I am to learn that my preparation has been at fault. I only have one year of education to my credit instead of two! Therefore, the revolt which caused me to spurn Education in my senior year will lead me to some country, or at least village, school—far removed from bookshops and lecture tickets, but a salvation place to such a one as I.

Once there, moreover, I shall determine to make my one year of Education do the work of two. From the first, I shall put into practice the theories which had lain idle in black notebooks for so long, and make them bear everlasting fruit.

With such a resolution as this I shall step into my schoolroom on the day after Labor Day, when well-regulated schools begin. There, I shall find a heterogeneous group of pupils hitching in their seats, craning their necks to see what I look like.

“That’s the new teacher! That’s the new teach-ir!” their stentorian young voices will assure me—knowing only too well how *new* I feel.

“Good morning, children. I am your new teacher,” I shall, in turn, reassure them, “Now let me see, you are of Junior High School age, I believe?”

“No, no! Seventh grade, teacher!” one voice will deny, and, “Eighth grade!” “Ninth grade!” two more.

"Ninth grade? Do you have *that*? Well, never mind. I will call you Junior High School, because that is what you really should be, you know!" The Junior High School idea, I shall recall, will help me to retain pupils; recognize individual differences; secure better scholarship, and six other things I had long since forgotten. It might be, I shall decide, wise to relearn them—to quote, in case of need.

"Junior High School sounds more grown-up, teacher," one little boy will pipe up with pride and new-found wonder in his tone.

In the meanwhile, one small boy will begin to choke. "Take him to the fountain, John!" I shall command another.

"Fountain?" he will question, "You mean the one out on the green?"

"No, the drinking fountain," I shall correct him. "You have one?"

"Oh, you mean the cold water faucet, teacher!" John will tell me scornfully. Or, perhaps, he will cry. "You mean the pail?"

With such lacks as these ringing in my ears I shall trudge to and fro each day to my so-called "Junior High School". I may find my pupils sleepy, and decide to rectify their stupidity; wake them up with exercise. "At the end of every hour, children, you may have ten minutes for anything you like," I plan to inform them—not expecting the wrath which is to descend upon me from the teacher of the next room.

"What on earth are you doing? You interrupted my biology lesson with your racket. Let me warn you—our principal will not stand for things like this. Your being new, I thought I had better tell you. He demands absolute quiet at all times."

"Yes, but—exercise!" I am to stammer.

"They have plenty of time to play as it is," she will snap at me with years of experience to back her up, so to speak. For this reason I shall allow my children to stumble stupidly on, although I *will* manage to let them sit idle for a little; let them relax while I tell them of Robin Hood or King Arthur.

Other problems I shall manage less well. Little Jimmy Jones, freckle-faced and red-haired, may come to tell me that he must leave school to go to work. With horror in my eyes,

I shall find myself urging him to stay a year or two longer. I *may* almost succeed in winning him over, when the principal, his head fringed with hair, will rebuke me for what he will term "interference." "I cannot have my teachers interfering with what I call home matters. The parent is the sole judge as to whether his boy should or should not remain in school."

"Very well—but—" I may begin; then check myself as I remember the slim roll of bills in my pocket-book.

Another pupil, ready to enter high school, may tell me that he wants to go to college, but, since his I. Q. is low, I shall advise him that he had better try something else. I dimly remember that Vocational Guidance should be a part of the work of every *good* teacher, and so, now, to the best of my ability, I shall inform Frederick that he is too mechanically inclined to waste his talents upon a liberal arts college. Just at the moment, however, when I have him almost convinced, I shall see my friend, the good principal, beaming benevolently upon us.

"Ah, Frederick, my boy!" and his beam will become expansive, "I hear you plan to go to college! That is fine, my dear boy. You will do us proud!"

"But," I may argue, after Frederick has retreated," that boy will never be able to go to college. Besides, he is not in high school yet, and his I. Q. is low."

"Yes, Miss S—, but I always try to instil the highest ideals in the young minds of my boys. He *may* pass yet. I cannot run the risk of letting my rating go down. There have always been six taking the college preparatory course from my school. This year, I cannot let it go down to five. Don't you see?"

I shall nod when I feel like shaking my fist.

"Another matter, Miss S—, I find that your boys do better in history and mathematics than the girls. Now those girls are not stupid."

"No, that is not it. The girls do better in language study. It has been proven, psychologically, that this *should* be the case. Therefore I do not see that there is anything to do. It is a matter of interests." I may reason thus as though I believed it. The good principal will look bewildered and depart—his arguments, mayhap, run out for the moment. I know, however, that he will soon be back—peering over the glass in the door when my back may be turned; standing,

perhaps, at the rear of the room when I am drawing a dinosaur on the blackboard for the edification of the young savages under my control. I shall even see him usher in the county superintendent, who will puff across the room with his Order of Elks badge shining from his vest, and interrupt the Collectors' Club which I shall hold in school hours.

"Now, don't you think, Miss S—," the county superintendent may begin, "that this is a waste of school time?"

"Ye—s," I shall respond meekly, even reluctantly—with a better answer on the tip of my tongue: "Repressed energy. Collectors' instinct. See Briggs, page 99, paragraph 2."

"It puts extravagant ideas into their young brains. Economy is the program of *this* school," the principal may admonish me with a broad sweep of his plump hand.

On another day, perhaps, I may have a more serious problem with which to cope. Cordelia will decide that she does not want to study; she may shriek, even, when I tell her to read. My educational psychology notes will then slide unannounced into my memory: "Watson's researches upon the new-born infants have revealed three generic types of innate response, each of which combines the impulsive and implicit mode with an explicit adjustment to objective conditions. These three types are fear, rage and love. . . . An instinct persists with varied effort until the disturbed equilibrium of the organism has been restored. . . . The innate patterns which form the background of all behavior are commonly called instincts." I do not now recollect whether our class was taught to accept Watson's theory, or that of Ogden or Koffka. Watson's will do in this case, I shall reason, since this child is evidently in a rage. She will certainly be older than Watson's new-born infant, but, since rage is an early instinct she must *still* have it. Therefore, I will allow her to cry—and stamp, and bite, and tear, for the benefit, I shall discover, of the selectmen who comprise the School Committee.

"Nice little performance," I can hear them say as they shake their heads. I shall feel the slim roll of bills in my pocket with fresh qualms. Their watch-chains, brassily noisy, will clank their answer to me across the room. Their penned notice I shall find on my green blotter at 8.30 the next morning; "Miss S—may find it best to resign at the end of the official school term." I can hear them making their decision now. "It is a pity, great pity my good principal

will say with magnanimity in his beam. The county superintendent will hem and haw. "Great pity! For one so young! To be so serious about it!"


"Yes," the School Board will answer, "She acts as if she means what she says. Very sorry case—very. Must do it. Have a new candidate for the job who has twelve hours of Education behind her. Evidently six is not enough. Yet, she seems to believe what she says! Queer! She appears to be so serious. Can't afford to let such a person stay."

So, I shall resign—not as they suggest with such politeness—"at the end of the official school term", but in November. The teacher next door will give me a frigid good-bye. The I-told-you-so in her smile will seem to tell me that she has heard me teaching Robert Frost instead of the geography of New England (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont), or Amy Lowell when I was supposed to be reading Washington's Inaugural Address. She will look askance when I smile back at her. "And *she* got fired!" I may hear her mutter as I wave my hand.

It will be, then, with a sense of freedom and a great shaking of school-room chalk from my feet that I shall return to my garret. My memoirs as a school mistress shall never be written as I had dared to hope. Instead, my black notebooks shall go the way of my manuscripts—to keep me warm! In the meanwhile, before I care to join the force of parlour maids, or the chief tasters' guild, I shall be hungry, and I shall write more sonnets to the sparrows, who will not bring me "bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening." But, at least, I can sit by my attic window and watch the children playing in the street—after their school is over!

THE DUEL

ELIZABETH WHEELER

HE "Lion d'Or" was crowded. Men gathered about every table, some playing cards, all drinking, all talking rapidly, gesticulating with half-emptied glasses. Their voices rose higher as the general din grew louder. Corks popped, glasses clinked, money jingled. The air was heavy with smoke and the odor of wine. Dripping candles and oil lamps threw a wan glow on the objects nearest them; the light from snapping birch logs reeled among the moving shadows on the opposite wall.

Four men lounged about the center table, animatedly discussing the other occupants of the room.

"Bourbons, Bonapartists, bourgeois and aristocracy," said the nervous little man with his back to the fire, and added with a dramatic gesture, "But all are children of la belle France."

"No, my dear Gaston," corrected the fat man next to him. "Not all. Look behind you."

Gaston pivoted swiftly on one leg of his chair. On the settle before the fire reclined an individual who was long and lean and built in folding sections, unlike the children of la belle France. His face was cold and still with an imperturbable calm. A pipe hung relaxed from his thin lips. His eyes travelled leisurely down the page of a magazine propped against his knees; it was the "Quarterly Review." His expression never changed as he read. He was utterly oblivious to the noise of song and argument that raged around him, and unconscious of the stares directed at him; wrapped in his own thoughts and sufficient unto himself.

Gaston swung around with a grimace of disgust.

"Mon Dieu, these English! Wherever you go, always the same, sour and stern, no *joie de vivre*."

Gaston spoke loudly, but the Englishman did not hear. He reached down his hand to pick up from the floor a glass of Burgundy. With his other hand, he removed the pipe

from his mouth, and drank slowly, his eyes still on the "Quarterly Review."

"Pah!" spat the fat man. "They think they own the earth. Look at him, appropriating the best seat in the room, just as if he belonged there instead of me who come here every night of my life."

"The fool! You'd think he'd hear us talking about him."

"Not he! He's far too superior to listen to anyone besides himself except possibly another Englishman."

Gaston hitched his chair nearer to the table and leaned forward.

"Pardieu," he said in a lowered tone. "Mon ami, you shall have your seat by the fire. *I'll* make him move. If I know these English, their love of themselves is only matched by their love of gambling. Just wait and see!"

Gaston hopped up briskly and approached the settle.

"Pardon, Monsieur, but—would you care to play cards? One finds it so dull travelling, n'est-ce pas?"

The Englishman looked up, and coolly considered Gaston's smiling face for a moment.

"Thank you very much, I should like to," he replied gravely. Putting aside his magazine, he unfolded himself and stood up. They joined the others at the table, where Gaston urbanely effected the introductions. The Englishman bowed stiffly, and took the seat vacated by the fat man who was even then ensconced in the settle before the fire.

One of the Frenchmen counted out the chips. Gaston dealt, smiling pleasantly.

"A sou a point, Monsieur: would that be satisfactory?"

"Oh, quite."

Before picking up his cards, the Englishman drew from his pocket a large gold watch which he laid before him on the table.

"I have to catch the Paris stage at three," he explained. It was then eleven.

They began to play. Gaston chatted volubly, laughing and gesticulating. The Englishman, intent on his game, replied in monosyllables; if he was annoyed at the garrulosity of his opponent, his face did not betray him. As the game progressed, his pile of chips mounted higher, while those of the three Frenchmen shrank steadily. Gaston grew

silent, but still smiled. The other two looked at him with open accusation in their eyes.

Unflinching the Englishman continued to gain. Gaston ceased to smile. His eyes darted angrily from the sullen faces of his two compatriots to the face of the Englishman, still masked in imperturbable calm. Gaston slapped down his last card. The Englishman tossed his on top of it. He had won again, and the bank was broken. Gaston swore. The Englishman said nothing, but leaned back in his chair and lit his pipe. He glanced for the first time at the corner of the table where his elbow had rested, then folded himself and looked under the table. Straightening, he asked casually of no one in particular,

"I say, has anybody seen my watch?"

Gaston sprang to his feet, upsetting his chair with a crash.

"Monsieur, do you mean to insinuate?" he began pompously. Then all control snapped, and he waved his arms wildly, exclaiming,

"Mon Dieu, you have insulted me! This is too much! You come here and take the only comfortable chair in the room. You offer to play cards with us. You rob us of our money. You are not content with a little, but you must have it all. And then you say I steal your watch! O-o-oh! I cannot bear it! You have insulted me. We will fight a duel. I—a thief! Oh, I am insulted!"

He was at last interrupted by repeated cries of "What is it, Gaston? What is it?" All the occupants of the room were crowding round the table, shouting and pushing, thirsting for excitement. Only the Englishman remained calm. He had risen from his seat, and had removed his pipe from his mouth. He waited until there was comparative silence as all eyes, following Gaston's accusing finger, were fixed on him.

"Pardon me, Monsieur, I merely asked if you had *seen* my watch. I am sorry you misunderstood me."

"Do you think I believe that? It makes no difference; you have insulted me. We will fight. Pierre and Michel, be my seconds. Make the arrangements with this—*Englishman*."

The Englishman shrugged his shoulders. His eye fell on something that lay under the chair where he had been sit-

ting. He stooped and picked up his watch, looked at it and put it in his pocket. No one appeared to notice; all were thronging round Gaston and his seconds. The Englishman sauntered to the fire, and sat down on the settle, opening the "Quarterly Review" at the page where he had left off. Deuced awkward situation, this, he reflected. It was now one o'clock. He was due to leave for Paris at three, and in the interim he had got to fight a duel, thanks to that ass of a Frenchman. He'd be damned if he would hit him, and mess things up any further. Maybe he would be hurt himself--devilish nuisance in a place like this; but if that Frenchman was no cleverer with weapons than he was with cards, he wouldn't be likely to do much damage except by luck.

At this point Gaston's seconds approached, with obvious contempt for their friend's adversary, and equally obvious enjoyment in the importance of their own position.

"Is Monsieur prepared to discuss the matter of the duel? Good. What weapons is Monsieur pleased to choose?"

"Pistols. At twenty paces. In the dark."

Under the cool gaze of the Englishman the seconds looked at each other apprehensively.

"Monsieur would not prefer swords? A victory with swords is more glorious. . ."

"And death in either case is quite as final."

"Pistols it is, then. And when and where would Monsieur prefer to fight?"

The Englishman pulled out his watch and made a leisurely calculation.

"At two o'clock, in any empty room that is available," he said with a finality that precluded any protest on the part of the obviously dissatisfied Frenchmen. They withdrew, muttering with their heads together, and the Englishman returned to his magazine. Presently he became aware that the foregoing arrangements did not please his adversary.

"Pistols, in the dark," shrieked Gaston from the other side of the room. "Mon Dieu, these English cannot even fight like gentlemen in the open with gentlemen's weapons, but must fire away in the dark like highwaymen. Not even a lantern? Insult upon insult! To kill or be killed like a rat in a hole! Oh, I will have his blood for this!"

During the ensuing hour, the "Lion d'Or" settled down to something like its normal composure. The tables were

once more crowded with gamblers and drinkers, singing and arguing as before, but suspense, heavier than the smoke, hung over the room. Even those most intent on their cards cast frequent glances now toward the fire, now toward the darkest corner of the room. The Englishman read on, puffing away at his pipe, his face inscrutable. Gaston leaned on a table, tattooing with his fingers, drinking Burgundy, sputtering disjointedly to his seconds. Occasionally his voice rose and a few words became audible to those at the tables nearby.

"What an insult! Pistols in the dark!"

"A clever swordsman, Gaston," someone remarked. "But he is gun-shy."

At five minutes of two, when suspense had cooled the fever of the most ardent gambler, the landlord entered the room, bawling loudly,

"This way, please, Messieurs."

Gaston swallowed a glass of wine at one gulp, and almost ran after the landlord, shouting,

"Allons, mes amis!"

The Englishman knocked the ashes from his pipe, and placed it with his magazine on the mantelpiece; then he strode after his adversary. Behind him pushed all the other occupants of the "Lion d'Or." At the end of a long passage, he found himself together with the landlord, Gaston and his seconds, in a large rectangular room, unfurnished except for a huge fireplace opposite the door.

The landlord held out several pistols. The Englishman selected one, examined it casually, and took his place at one end of the room, with the fireplace on his right. On his left, two deep along the full length of the wall stood all his fellow-travellers, eyes flashed with anticipation. Opposite him, at a distance of twenty paces which had just been measured by the seconds, Gaston shifted from one foot to the other, fingering his pistol, apparently almost unable to wait for the signal.

The Englishman's eyes without moving, took in every detail.

"By Jove," he thought, "What a perfectly rotten way to manage a duel! With all these chaps standing about, someone's sure to be hurt. Damnme, I don't want to hit anybody, not even that ass Gaston. What a bally nuisance to be mixed

up in such an affair! Wait a minute, though! Of course---the fireplace. That'll do."

With imperturbable calm, he listened to the landlord's instructions.

"The lights will be extinguished. Then I will count three. At three you will fire. Are you ready, Messieurs?"

The lights were blown out.

"One! Two! Three!"

One shot rang out, and, strangely, it seemed to come from the fireplace.

"Mon Dieu, I am killed!"

Lanterns were lighted hastily. The Englishman was standing in his place at the end of the room, a smoking pistol in his hand. In the fireplace, moaning and cursing, with both hands clasped around one knee, lay Gaston.

An exclamation of surprise burst from the crowd as they surged forward around the unfortunate man. But in a second, as comprehension dawned, there was a shout of derision.

The Englishman's face remained inscrutable. "By Jove, serves him jolly well right," he said to himself as he strode over to the fireplace. He reached up to lay the pistol on the mantelpiece. Then, looking down at Gaston over the heads of twenty babbling Frenchmen, he said coolly,

"I say, I hope you're not much hurt."

Gaston glanced hastily at him with hatred in his eye, then turned away, spluttering feebly,

"You have insulted me."

The Englishman swung around and strode out of the room. Presently he was reclining on the settle before the fire, his pipe hanging from his mouth, and against his knees was propped the "Quarterly Review."


JEALOUSY

HELEN FISKE

But when
I loved the moon,
The sun unsheathed his light
From the scabbard of the hills and struck
Me blind.

SHRINE TO AESCULAPIUS

SALLIE S. SIMONS

ARE as it is, there may be that peculiar harmony between man and the things about him which induces a creative repose. It is not the harmony which dulls the instant response of sense to outward impression, the sort of peace due rather to lethargy in man than serenity in nature. An equality that produces a repose which still is active must be formed of motion and of quietness, a synthesis of change and continuity. This feeling, intangible and elusive, is experienced, I think, only in the country. I cannot imagine a sense of rising power, coupled with the most complete relaxation, in surroundings pitched to a tautness of activity. No, the movement that I sense even late at night in the city is harsh and restive, in no way comparable to the stirring in the country air. And it is at Pelham that I find its perfect expression. I am most conscious of it in the spring, though I have felt it when color burned over the hills and when blue shadows drew across the snow.

Pelham is only a generic name. It seems to extend inclusively over the Berkshires east of Amherst. I believe there is a Central Pelham and a West Pelham through which the street car sways with alarming purposefulness, but both are slight, hampered, North-of-Boston gestures, frugal, with narrow white houses and a general store. To me, Pelham is a brown shingled house with a red roof, and woods that slope away from it down the long hill. As I open the gate I may be barked at, but I am reassured to see a poodle with a coat permanently and badly waved. I closed it behind me so that the more regal Pekinese will not trot through majestically, drawing the delicate buff plumes on his feet and tail into a less appropriate milieu. He would like very much to stretch his svelt brevity on the single pile of stones which marks the one-time aspiration towards a gate post. Because it is still early spring, the rose bushes are only guileless sprouts, and six feet of last summer's sunflower grins dryly at the house. I leave my bag indoors and go into the fields,

which are not cultivated, being maintained as hunting ground for the gentleman cat named "Winnie".

The north edge of the pasture is lost in a growth of white pine. As the sun strikes obliquely on the highest branches, they lose color, the needles glinting like sparkling facets of spun glass. The boughs press down and in upon the path, and the ground is resilient under foot. I walk without noise, slipping a little on the needles, and leaving no imprint. There are late red checker berries and bluets no taller than the moss. The quiet odor of pine lies on the ground, but above the stillness I hear the wind moving evenly through the trees. The influence is irresistible, exciting, and those who love Pelham recognize beneath the movement a reserve which is a startling source of power the greater for its unforeseen tranquility.

As I come from green shadow into the open-maple woods on the far side of the pines, I am increasingly aware of another sound, very like the wind but deeper toned and unvarying. It is the brook. Not very wide, never more than ten or twelve feet, its course is rough with rocks, just inaccessible each from the other. A large one in midstream is within wading distance, and I often lie there to watch the water, tumbling up to it, part and slide in a long undulation around the sides, smoothing them gently. I try to catch a little as it slips resolutely and graciously under my hand. So I have wished on summer evenings to fasten in the air the fragrances of lavender stock before it was swept away on the first night breeze like water running through the fingers. The sun glistens in a bubble and then plunges deeper reflecting reds and yellows on the stones. Where in the fall I saw a crystal emptiness flowing over pebbles, in the spring I found the warm amber brown of earth and old leaves held melted in the water. Brown is a still color, without motion, but merged with a quick red it turns to bronze, a color not impassive, not coldly rigid, and yet not wholly changing.

Not all people go to Pelham. One must bring an awareness of what is lovely and an eagerness for what may be beautiful. The little things become the great things,—the pine needles and the odor of the woods, the sound and color of the brook. I do not think that I should find the same completeness elsewhere. The harmonious perfection demands an increase of sensitivity, a fullness of appreciation.

Whether from the brook itself or from the wind flowing through the branches of the pines, there is everywhere the sound of running water, tranquil and yet strengthening. I should be content to stay at Pelham. It draws from me a "quickened multiplied consciousness", a sense of repose most splendidly creative.

POEM

RACHEL GRANT

These trees have drunk the sun,
Fire-filled, their strength
Breaks into clarion color on the hills.
Maples, with a strange new energy,
Burn in the wind
And sumac kindles to a darker flame;
In all the torch-lit wood
Only the blanched ferns are dim.
Crushed beneath air, they break
With a slight sound of foam.

THE PERSONAL TOUCH

VIRGINIA FARRINGTON

MISS Baxter prided herself on the interest she took in her students. The Seventh Grade was her family, she was wont to say, and the proprietary air with which she addressed each eleven-to-thirteen year old unit of it bore out her assertion. It is doubtful however, if the Seventh Grade accepted Miss Baxter's interest in quite the spirit in which it was meant. In fact, there was a rumor that outside the white-washed fence which inclosed the grammar school playground, she was known to the ribald tongues of the pupils as "The Snoop."

There was a neat card file on the oak desk which faced the roomful of thirty-three scrub-mopped or sleek pigtailed heads. "Taking 'Tendence'" was the first process of the day. On this particular Monday morning the October sunlight sifting in broad beams through the yellow shades found only one member of the Seventh Grade absent from school. Thirty-two pairs of already grimy hands were folded on straight desks, thirty-two mouths were pursed in adolescent self-righteousness, thirty-two pairs of eyes—assorted brown, blue, tan, and green—were fixed on Teacher's face as she looked up from the pile of neatly lettered white cards.

"Can anyone tell me where James Bendetti is today?" asked Miss Baxter. Her pale eyes fairly oozed sympathetic interest behind the hard glint of her rimless spectacles. Jimmy was not usually absent from class although there were those who thought it might be better for the Seventh Grade if he were. Perhaps he was ill today. That would give Miss Baxter an opportunity to see what his home conditions were like—she could take him a little note of condolence from the class. She loved seeing what home conditions were like almost as much as she loved having her "little family" write notes of condolence of those stricken in health. Besides being good practice in English composition it developed their sense of civic responsibility.

A dozen hands had sprung up in answer to her query as to Jimmy's whereabouts. There was always a delightful alacrity about the way the Seventh Grade offered information, and on this occasion it was more marked than usual.

"Yes, Sophie. Do you know what is the matter with James this beautiful autumn morning?", Miss Baxter addressed her favorite pupil, the daughter of the local banker.

"Yes'm. He's in jail." Sophie was an artist—she did not spoil the effect of her announcement by attempting to add details. Her round eyes gazed with great enjoyment at her teacher's evident distress. It wasn't every day that she had a chance to throw a bombshell like this—Bud Fitch had just been aching to be the one to tell about it. Sophie twisted in her seat and struck the curly end of a malicious pink tongue in Bud's general direction.

"Why, now, how very terrible. And what was the cause of this catastrophe?" Miss Baxter was beginning to recover from the shock and to realize the possibilities of the situation. She could see herself in her best black coat holding the hand of an unjustly incarcerated James, and reading the prisoners the *Christian Science Monitor*.

"Aw, he tried to knife a guy what he found kissing his sister." Henry Graham volunteered this information with a scornful twist of his thin mouth. Nobody'd ever go makin' love to his sister, that was sure. She was the homelist girl in Delaware county, said the town.

Miss Baxter felt the red flood which had surged up into her virginal grey face subside. "That will do, Henry. We will begin on page forty-three of the arithmetic book, if you please."

School didn't go very well that day. There was too much whispering behind the the large drab covers of Dickinson's *Geography of the World*; too many triangular notes tossed quickly from row to row; too restless an atmosphere throughout the bare walled room. The case of James Bendetti was having a bad effect on the Seventh Grade.

After dismissal that afternoon, Principal Arthur called Miss Baxter into his office. He was a pompous man with grey hair and an astoundingly small nose which was likely to wiggle a bit at the end in times of mental stress. It was wiggling now.

"Miss Baxter, I daresay you have heard that young

James Bendetti has been put in prison. A very sad affair indeed. It seems that he was protecting his sister's honor against the advances of a ruffian cousin who was boarding with them. The boy seized upon a kitchen knife which happened to be at hand, and, it is believed, wounded this Paulo quite badly. No one censures James very severely—in fact I gather that he is something of a hero in the town. At any rate, Miss Baxter, I felt sure that you would want to go and see him, in accordance with the interest which you take in your pupils."

"Thank you, Professor Arthur, of course I was planning to do that. I shall try to make James feel that, while we deplore his action, we do not feel that he was greatly to blame."

"Exactly, Miss Baxter. You have a wonderful way with children."

"Well, as I always say, Professor Arthur, they are just like a little family to me." Miss Baxter's uplifted eyes and coy smile puffed out the principal's chest. He had long been convinced that were he an unmarried man, he would have but to say the word and Susan Baxter would be his. Even with his dear wife and four daughters in existence, this thought gave him a certain satisfaction.

At precisely five o'clock of that same Monday, Miss Baxter in her best black coat was ushered by a red faced and obsequious jailer into the small cell of James Bendetti. The criminal looked absurdly small, sitting hunched up on the narrow bed with his skinny knees drawn up to meet his chin. In the black eyes which greeted his visitor there gleamed a sullen fear that somehow was not quite in keeping with the righteously mournful expression on the thin dark young face.

"Ah, James, I am very sorry, very sorry indeed, to find you here. We missed you in school today." She had decided not to take too serious a tone with him at first.—She was sure that James was a nervous, high-strung lad. She spoke of affairs of the Seventh Grade for some time to put him at his ease, then abruptly she asked the question she had been pondering.

"James, won't you tell me just exactly how this happened? You know I am very anxious to help you in any way I can, and I want you to know that I think it was very fine of you to go to your sister's rescue, although of course what

you should have done would have been to call the police." Miss Baxter was vaguely annoyed to feel that she was blushing again. The boy's stare was curiously malicious, it seemed to her, as though he found in her perfectly natural interest in a pupil, some evidence of a morbid curiosity.

But Jimmy's eyes filled suddenly with tears. He felt sweep over him the necessity of telling some one the truth, and his teacher was being as kind as she could. He would tell her, let them punish him.

"It was this way, Miss Baxter. Ol' Paulo, this here cousin of ours, he was a mean one. He'd been boardin' with us for pret' near a month, and never would give none of us kids a penny or nothin', and was always kickin' us out of the way. Well, last night, my dad he was over on Guinea Hill buying some whiskey. My dad he sells more whiskey than anyone else in Walltown."

Miss Baxter drew a sharp breath. The awful pride with which the boy made this horrible assertion! His home conditions were impossible, evidently. It was really wonderful that such an impulse of chivalry as must have actuated him last night had not been entirely stamped out in these sordid surroundings.

"Where was your mother, James?" she inquired, to change the subject from an undesirable discussion of the merits of Mr. Bendetti as a vendor of whiskey.

"Ma? Aw, she ran off with a Greek that sold popcorn when we lived in Newark." James' tone was casual; he didn't remember his mother much. He continued in a tone which grew more dramatic, as he approached the climax of his story.

"Well, I was comin' back from the poolroom 'bout ten o'clock. There wasn't any light in the house, I noticed, 'cept in the kitchen, so when I come in, I went out there. Guess what I seen."

"Saw, not seen, James." Miss Baxter sought refuge in grammatical correction. Her maidenly mind forbade itself to indulge in any such wild conjectures as her pupil apparently expected. He waited a moment, then went on, since no guesses were forthcoming.

"Well, I'll tell you. Right there in front of me on the table was Paulo's wallet. And it was all stuffed full of bills, 'cause he gets paid twenty dollars every Saturday night for workin' on the road. Jeeze, Miss Baxter, I couldn't do nothin'

but gawp around and wonder what had made ol' Paulo leave it there where us kids might find it. It was pret' dark in the kitchen with the lamp turned down real low. 'Nen all of a sudden I noticed Paulo and my sister Roise standin' in the pantry kissin' each other. They didn't see me at all."

Jimmie's eyes were opaque and glowing ellipses in his olive face. He was talking faster now, and seemed to have forgotten his startled listener.

"I never thought he'd turn around. I grabbed that wallet faster'n anything, and jus' as I did it, he did turn aroun' an' saw me. I was too scared to run—Jeeze, I was scared. Ol' Paulo, he grabs me by the throat. 'You dirty little thief!' he says, 'I will kill you quick.' So I grabbed a knife that was on the table and I dug it into Paulo ver' hard. It went squish! and he fell on the floor. So Rosie and me we made up a story to tell to the p'lice, 'cause Rosie don't really like Paulo, just the money he gives her," Jimmie ended with a grunt of approval.

Miss Baxter was sitting bolt upright in her chair. Her horrified brain was not functioning properly—it refused to take in the meaning of sentences she felt related somehow to another world. Jimmy, who had been carried away by the relief of relating events as they had actually happened, came down to earth with a bump as he saw the expression on his teacher's face. He felt suddenly haunted. Had he been crazy? They might hang him for knifing Paulo, if they did not think he'd done it to help Rosie. Jeeze, he never should have told the old snoop all that!

"Miss Baxter, you know I'm a 'nawful story teller," he said wheedlingly. "I jus' get started on a story and I can't stop. That was all a big lie what I just told you, Teacher. I jus' made it up while I was sittin' here with nothing to do. 'Course why I really knifed Paulo was to pertect Rosie's honor." He had heard Professor Arthur use this phase that morning, and he seized upon it in desperation.

Miss Baxter's brain cleared itself slowly of the thick mist that had seemed for a few moments to penetrate it. No wonder the poor boy had gone almost insane—a terrible strain just to sit there feeling the disgrace of being in jail. And of course he had always been an incorrigible story teller. She remembered the tale he had told one noon to scare little

Sophie—a lurid horrible account of the murder of an old darkey in a graveyard.

"I understand, James. Professor Arthur and I will do all we can. Meanwhile if I were you, I should forget the whole affair as much as I could. You'd better eat your dinner now, and get a good night's sleep," and Miss Baxter rose to leave as the jailer brought in Jimmy's supper.

As she walked briskly back to her boarding place, she felt a glow of acknowledged virtue. It wasn't every teacher who would have sat in that damp cell an hour, letting an imaginative pupil tell lengthy and morbid tales of unreal happenings. Well, she considered it part of her work—this personal interest in her pupils.



BOOK REVIEWS



ORLANDO

VIRGINIA WOOLF

Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1928

Looking at Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* one need not be very clever to realize that he did not use models for these struggling and heavily falling bodies. They are not posed; nobody ever took their originals and pulled them into a posture which could be held by living flesh for a half hour, or even ten minutes, while the master sketched. They portray movement—the wincing, the reluctance and the leaden plunge of despair. How could they be posed? Pretend for a moment that Michelangelo equipped himself with a models' gymnasium, hung with safety nets for acrobatics; he sent men and women up rope ladders to fling themselves out into the air, and plunge, and be caught; he sat watching falling bodies all day; and when his retina seemed etched with naked acrobats he painted the sight out again for the *Last Judgment*. Would that explain it? Look then at the Day on the tomb of Giuliano de' Medici; a figure in brief pause, but swelling to twist into action; could this be posed? And could his sister Night be found among the models of Renaissance Florence? Those faddists who measure everything, put tape-measures on Day, and then went looking for his equal among prize-fighters; but having searched very thoroughly they reported: no human being's muscles swell as large as these bands; no wrestler can reproduce his pose. And that is just the answer which even casual and inartistic sight-seers make before any of Michelangelo's frescoes and statues.

From the same kind of tape-measure accuracy coupled with respect for authority the middling-intelligent man has come to accept the fact that great art refuses to be true to life. (Grand Opera isn't a bit like us, he says; a symphony sounds like nothing else you ever heard; and I suppose—since

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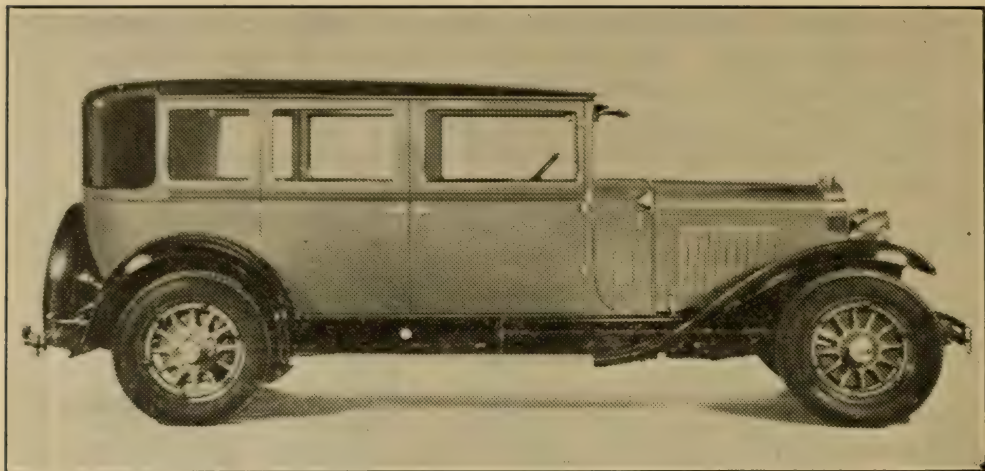
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you insist—that a book is just the same. We can't expect it to imitate life.) Of course these persons prefer imitation, since they can understand it better; or a greater art, like Shakespeare's, in which they mistake their recognition of vague old feelings transfigured for mere accurate imitation. Other critics see the truth; that art should create; and that a character in a book, like a painting or a piece of music, has more to do than shadow an original. For truth is more than actuality; as a portrait is more than a photograph, and a lover's aria more than the phonographic eaves-dropping from the same type in a Bronx apartment house or a road just back of Main Street. Reproduction has held writers earth-bound, except as they could forget individual cases, let experiences enter into the fluid of their own personality to be dissolved; and finally produce a new creature, who has no nearer relative than the writer himself; a creation unbound by memory, who will live completely in a pattern formed from his own necessities and those of his environment. This process Mrs. Woolf knows well; she has repeatedly given us men and women of intense individuality, whose days are flavored freshly, being neither stale nor warmed over; whose life burns brightly within the consciousness, not like our incomplete life, but like the life we might lead if we were not dull-sleepy most of our days. Shakespeare's lines have this quality of realizing the potentialities of our own smaller life. And as his situations brought from the players on his scene, Romeo, Othello or Hamlet, words not as we would say them but as we might hope to have them said, so Mrs. Woolf surprises the knowledge lying behind our consciousness, compounding a language different from many we use, being a medium apart. This rare talent for new-born forms has set all her work apart, before *Orlando*.

In writing *Orlando* she traveled dangerous ground. The subject would have been easier, and less complex, to a young writer who had not yet ventured to treat life itself, stripped of concrete example. Her two pieces of impudence were, first, to pick up a contemporary and drop her into Sham history-biography; and second, to write his biography as a joke. At once she flouted holy literary aloofness, (call it propriety, though it might better be described as artistic creation;) and her own sincerity. You may laugh sincerely, but all the parts of your joke will be grotesques. With some shrewdness



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she next broadened her field of targets; and reversed all laws at once, biological and temporal as well as literary; then she picked out critics, biographers, all writers; and mortal man, and herself, to tar with the same stick. Especially she amused herself with the sexes. Thus, while she was making enemies, she included most of mankind, and having equalized the mixture, hurt nobody; jealousies were impossible; her book retained a singular pureness from spite. W. S. Gilbert worked with the same impartiality, in the Savoy Operas. Such a joke, aimed at everybody, ceases almost to be a joke, and becomes an attitude of mind; so, paradoxically, Mrs. Woolf seems to have been sincere. Then, the central theme treated here would not have been invented at all, but through a kind of sincerity of interpretation. After all, there must be some reason for every act or thought; in a simple case, we put an egg on to boil because we feel hungry; more complexely, we give a friend a nick-name because something about her suggests the figure. So Mrs. Woolf describes a boy born under Elizabeth over three centuries ago; he does not grow old or die; after a century or more he turns into a woman; and we follow her vivid career till the twelfth stroke of midnight sounds: "The twelfth stroke of midnight, Thursday, the eleventh of October, Nineteen Hundred and Twenty-eight." The account closes here; yet Orlando lives on. . . . Not even Mrs. Woolf's imagination would build this story if it had not been given an initial push by truth. It is thus that she again evades censure for her joke; she must have meant a great deal of it. And, actually, what started this train in her? With characteristic complexity she saw in the original woman more than a solitary individual; the rich old blood colored her life with reminiscent moods and acts; growing up from the home of her ancestors, she was compact of their lordliness and their gypsy adventuring; their imaginative restlessness and their changeable life. She was a woman who could never stand like a naked Eve, clipped of tradition, looking only forward. Again, her masculine mind, and perhaps an artificiality about her physical identity worked upon Mrs. Woolf for expression. Finally all these observations amalgamated into one form; the woman became her house; she came fluently down the centuries, undying. Such liberties as Mrs. Woolf took with time and with sexual identity gained value because Mrs. Woolf is incapable of leaving her subject alone; she

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must pour herself into everything; she sees with whomever she treats. The aesthetic experience of living with Orlando through five ordinary life-times has brought her beyond the bounds of joking; with conviction she flouts death; she allows humanity to slide from manhood to womanhood, changing manners as clothes change with time, and proprieties with climate; quite constant underneath all. The question of universality is not forced; we should not believe Orlando to be like everybody else. The laughing mood covers all these slurred edges; time is not serious; sex is not serious; literary interests are more important, but literary people, how despicable! Orlando is not serious; that is why he never kills himself; he has only a bright interest, pliancy and activity. The change from manhood to womanhood is drawn broader, much broader, than Mrs. Woolf has drawn before; the ceremony of the Three Sisters, Purity, Chastity and Modesty, moves with a ludicrous, thumping dance to its climax. Suddenly we see the authoress turning Elizabethan herself, to jerk her original somewhat coarsely in the ribs. She does not work so grotesquely again, until, perhaps, the theme of sexual change returns, and the Archduchess Harriet becomes a man; while still later Orlando's lover Shelmerdine plays back and forth across the dividing line with her as if they were dancing together to a tune something like this: "'Are you sure you're not a woman?' 'Are you really not a man?'" Truly here the story avoids the bounds of biography, or novel, or even farce; and it becomes a written dance, like a violent puppet-dance at first; then more human; and then increasingly graceful, less jerky, until we are caught in its rhythm and follow perforce to Mrs. Woolf's premise, which in the immediate case turns Orlando into a genuine woman for us; while secondarily it wipes out the dividing line between the characters of the sexes. If that broad comedy stings us unpleasantly in the scene of climax, it may be remembered finally as an appropriate device to the form of the book.

If, then, Mrs. Woolf trifled with truth and drew out a greater truth, what happened to her character, which alone in her book is drawn deliberately from actuality? Has Orlando been posed? Supposedly, if he came forth from his making new-created, he would have been divorced from his original, and the purpose of the book would have lost. Or if he was indeed the ape made to caper after his mistress, ever

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so gracefully, he would not, by the standards of so many critics, remain a fine creation. I believe that the answer must be sought in the quality of Mrs. Woolf's art, in which the world is dipped to change its very substance. Orlando entered it blocked out as a caricature, and left it carrying Mrs. Woolf's identity, for the time; walked through the centuries with eyes through which she watched mankind, amused; acted physically as she acts intellectually; broke through limiting actuality as she chips away the crust from a flowing imaginative life; and generally dismaved his neighbors by refusing to be a convention-poldder. I do not mean that he was the less like his original for being the person we read. I mean that Mrs. Woolf seems incapable of sustained insincerity or sustained imitation; she cannot shut herself out of her people; and when she has flowed in, she becomes like those independent people, only intensifid, heated, and individual in the tight packing of the character. Orlando will be considered no less than the greatest of her creations.

A. L. B.

REGINALD AND REGINALD IN RUSSIA

SAKI (H. H. Munro) New York: The Viking Press, 1928

If it were possible for a butterfly—a little butterfly, but beautiful—to be entombed in a bit of ice, through which its delicate lines would seem more distinct, more permanent, and somehow unapproachable, it might recall Saki. The figure may be fantastic, but even that belongs to him. He is at the same time so inexplicably impalpable and yet so inexplicably hard. Flight arrested; and the arrest miraculously translated in to cold tangibility.

The work of man who was killed in the war has an advantage all its own: it makes an appeal, irrelevant to the content, because of a universal pity or sympathy or admiration for the author, even after some lapse of time. Sometimes the appeal blinds, appreciation becomes an expression of charity. Saki himself, with his characteristic irreverence of death, might have laughed at all this, and spoken epigrammatically on the literary and commercial advantages subsequent to "Pro

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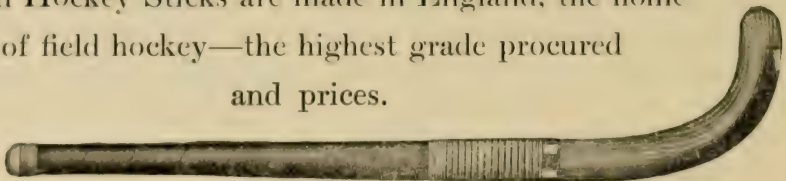
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patria mori". But those authors who appeal only to charitable natures do not live long,—in the literary sense; post-war memory is too short. Post-war appreciation, however, may be permanent and, in the case of Saki, accumulative, since he is known more and more widely.

His strong point is his humor, to which his premature death adds a note of irony, which, again, he himself would have appreciated. Humor is here too general a term, but the cataloging of the various species of humor is so eternally debatable! The frequent comparison of Saki to Wilde seems the best, though in many senses the two are very different; Saki, for instance, is certainly less artificial, more spontaneous. He sees everything, even the tragic, with a little humorous twist, but he succeeds especially in his character observation:

"Before we had time to recover our spirits, we were indulged with some thought-reading by a young man, whom one knew instinctively had a good mother and an indifferent tailor the sort of young man who talks unflaggingly through the thickest soup, and smooths his hair dubiously as though he thought it might hit back."

—"the girl, for instance, (at houseparties) who reads Meredith, and appears at meals with unnatural punctuality in a frock that's made at home and repented at leisure."

But sometimes he descends to a sort of stained littleness:

"The cook was a good cook as cooks go; and as cooks go she went."

Perhaps he redeems himself, however, in the keenness of his general observations:

"Every reformation must have its victims. You can't expect the fatted calf to share the enthusiasm of the angels over the prodigal's return."

And he may be forgiven much for his ingenuity and the achievement of a masterful incongruity in such breath-taking jumps toward the romantic as:

"So I got up the next morning at early dawn—I know it was dawn, because there were lark-noises, and the grass looked as if it had been left out all night."

He tickles, perhaps he goads a little, he tantalizes just out of reach; he is a literary Puck.

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bolized in his medium, Reginald, a very young man, who believes that "To have reached thirty is to have failed in life", but a very worldly person who lounges about summing up people and things with a disrespectful but delightful acidity. The short stories in *Reginald in Russia* best illustrate Saki's simplicity; *Gabriel-Ernest* is unforgettable for that very reason. The first collection, *Reginald*, more sketches than real stories, brings out a complicated cleverness and, like all humorous writing, loses in volume form the force of the earlier intermittent magazine appearances. But whether his mood is simplicity or sophistication (and he jumps from one to the other so quickly!), Saki's manner is different—not different in a glaring, tabloid sense, but different in a youthful, reckless, impertinent sense.

Saki himself pricks so many balloons that it would be unfitting to give a well-blown generalization as to his degree of literary excellence, even that which he might have achieved had he lived; His work has an incidental element that may mean an incidental fame, though the present popularity would argue otherwise.

Ellen Robinson '29

PENNAGAN PLACE

ELEANOR CHASE

J. H. Sears and Co. 1928

Pennagan Place is a 'first novel'. Reading it is like opening a window in a stale room. Unconsciously it throws a revealing light on the sentimentalism, the silly self-conscious cynicism, the pseudo-cleverness that has invaded present day literature. The clear wind of it blows their insipid flatness into the daylight. We cannot but be pleased to find a book whose natural charm and dignity is not marred by that labored artificiality that is so much a part of the modern novel.

The Pennagans live in the Middle West, three generations of them, over by the ruthless old patriarch Giles. One cannot described them, the Pennagans, living proudly and contemptuously in the isolation of their home, because the author herself has not described them—she has created them. They are living people, everyone of them—Christopher, Nickodemus, Benjamin and Curtis and Donna and little Webby; most of all Giles—'magnificent, terrible old man.'

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As characters they are entirely consistent throughout the book. And Miss Chase lets them live their lives in their own wilful way. She lets them wander in and out of the story as they please, drinking and laughing, quarreling and calling for more whiskey. This book is vital, amazingly vital and amazingly real—Lisa's port, Webby's bread flower, Giles's remarks, so wonderfully obscene and cruel and amusing. All of them become living realities.

It is impossible to understand just how Miss Chase has achieved this result. But it seems to me that it is partly due to a quality of effortlessness. There is nothing forced, nothing labored throughout the whole. Almost unconsciously she has put her vitality and her own humor into the book. Because she knew the Pennagans intimately, we also can know them. Because she loved them and laughed at them, we love them and laugh at them with her. And it seems to me, also, that there is a certain basic conception in the book which gives it much of its power. This is the concept that sincerity and loyalty are the fundamental issues of life, before which all conventional moral codes are subordinated. Curtis and Donna stand at the opposite poles in this. Giles himself is an appalling old sinner, an amazing liar, yet he is loyal and wholly sincere. You will find almost all the sins in the Pennagan family, but only Donna is disloyal. This subtle recognition of sincerity, even though it is never mentioned, gives to the book the possession of truth, a direct, creative force, vitalizing the whole.

And so we will always carry our memories of it—the autumn wind, Lisa, in a blown frock, greeting Giles and Min and the stage coach, Curtis in her yellow dress, Giles calling for champagne to celebrate Min's return, Nick whooping back to his family and tearing off again—and through it all a freedom of thought and a freedom of creation that has attained much.

Anne Homer '29

THE ISLAND WITHIN

LUDWIG LEWISOHN

Harpers 1928

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That Ludwig Lewisohn's *The Island Within* is intended as an epic is evident, both from the author's preface, and from its subject matter. Here is presented the story of a Jewish family in its wandering from Russia where its prestige had been established, to Germany where much of its individuality is swamped, and finally to New York City where the vestige of its racial consciousness balks at assimilation.

But Lewisohn's conception of generation succeeding generation is dramatic rather than epic or panoramic. He portrays only the crises in the lives of his successive characters, not the even tenor of their living or their more universal emotions which bind one age to another. To him, the individual is too murningly important to be subordinated to the time chain, to the struggle of heredity and environment. On the contrary, the epic writer must survey the whole sea of time, not the crest or valley of a single wave.

The epic, furthermore, cannot regard all individuals as important in themselves, as does Lewisohn. For it works with the dream-stuff, the ideals of a people, and with characters superlative in greatness, goodness, or even in wickedness. *The Island Within* lacks, consequently, the epic unity, usually obtained through one grandly dominating figure. Only the epic unity of strong racial feeling is here present.

Although Mr. Lewisohn has not succeeded in his declared intention, nevertheless he has created a novel of indubitable merit. His thorough comprehension of the psychology of the Jew, particularly of the Jew in America, enables him to create characters of a fiery intensity and to present problems whose depth and insolubility yawn like dark abysses before the cold light of reason which the author attempts to focus upon them. Anthropology and sociology may deny the existence of a Jewish racial type, but Mr. Lewisohn recognizes and poignantly portrays the seemingly inherent race feeling, and its fight against assimilation. His eye, keen for the dramatic, selects situations like the parental reception of the two exogamic marriages and the position of the Jewish doctor in the state asylum, and makes of them unforgettable pictures, through his concrete realism and his minute characterization.

Without a doubt this book is more carefully written, more reflectively conceived, than Lewisohn's other novels. Lewisohn, the propagandist, is calmed by the age and

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breadth of the grievance to which he is giving utterance. He is writing the modern "epic" of his own people, and his manner derives loftiness from his intent. Unlike his earlier and more subjective novels, this book has a plan, and a big plan, and its parts are introduced by philosophic generalizations, certainly not unsuccessful. *The Island Within* deserves more consideration than we should, at first, think warranted to the author of the somewhat sensational *Upstream* and the slipshod *Don Juan*.

Ethel Polacheck '29



THE
MONTHLY



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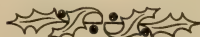
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“AND NOTE THE DIFFERENCE”



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“HOW MANY MILES TO BABYLON?”

PRISCILLA S. FAIRCHILD

HE train was clicking along the track to a rhythm syn-
copated by grunts and squeaks and groans. Back
over my head my lifted hand touching the fuzzy sticky
plush, and higher still the slick metal stippled to imitate
wood. I realized suddenly where I was. We stopped, and
pushing up the shade I saw a man's face and hand caught,
transfixed in the light of an oil lantern that modeled the con-
tours, and etched in sharp relief the edges of his features
against the blackness. Hoarse cries of men's voices, the hiss-
ing of steam, and ponderous thumps echoed in darkness that
was like the concave, hollowed back-drop of a theatre, the
setting for a symbolical mystery play, in which the effects
though important are muted, subordinate to the drama of
the central spectacular figure, in this case the man whose
lifted lantern had sharpened and defined himself. Chief,
then, among the confused impressions I bore as the train
lurched forward again, was this sight of an unknown man,
who by some trick of circumstance had become the central
figure in a play whose significance I could never understand,
whose lines I should never know, however passionate the
drama, whose end, like its beginning, would be no less a
secret to me, because I had glimpsed a single illuminated
moment.

The train was rushing on again with a rhythmic clack-
clack against the rails, swinging on their hooks my flopping
clothes, those extra-ordinary ghosts whose life and colour

and motion is only borrowed from the flesh which they cover. Yet now in their loose slackness I saw a certain dangling reminiscence of myself, as a sick man in his fever detaches himself from his body and looking at it from a height sees it thin and empty as an old sack and yet undeniably his.

Into my mind made vacant by the speed, the noise urged an old jingle.

"How many miles to Babylon?

Three-score miles and ten.

Can I get there by candle-light?

Yes, and back again."

Drugged, numb, body lulled to a trance by the swift onrush through the night, my mind became as fleet, and spun off through incredible distances.

I saw all the intense thin youth of a nation riding swift as March wind, bright and boisterous as March sunlight, towards an unknown city, whose brilliance and glamour had spread as far as coloured autumn leaves blown down the dusty highways. Eager boys with hair blown back like a saint's in a stained-glass window, reined in their horses at the cross-roads with nervous fingers, and leaned out of the saddles to ask breathlessly, "How many miles to Babylon?"

The answer, dry, laconic, bored, of a man who had seen so many rushing headlong for the city of high places, had stormed there himself, dry-lipped and wide-eyed, once, was, "Three-score miles and ten."

"Can I get there by candle-light?"

Oh, hurry, hurry, old fool! There is no time to waste! We must be in Babylon by candle-light, when the music begins, and rustlingly, languorously, the thin blue haze of evening thickens in pools down curving streets. To Babylon—to Babylon!

Slow, ironically mocking, there is an answer, "Yes, and back again."

He came back, they all come back from Babylon, and life goes on as it was before, leaving a dry ashy taste now and then, and there is the desert to cross before you get home, the sandy, metallic desert between Babylon, hot and wild as a flame, and the cool streams and green fields of home.

* * * * *

I had dozed the thick unnatural sleep engendered by an unaccustomed bed and strange surroundings, and with all


the queer sensations accompanying such an awakening, I stirred again and pushed up the shade. We were crossing the desert; and between the sand-hills and dunes of distorted shapes, pushed around by a careless wind, peered curious mesas, sand-eroded to figures easily interpreted into animal and human likenesses. A red and flattened moon was setting. The effect was as artificial and theatrical as a flat seen in naked electricity, waiting behind the scenes for the next shift. In its very overwhelming impressiveness, the appearance of the land was stupid, too crude, too obvious. Tired and disgusted, I tried to imagine the ranch to which we were going.

Would the mountains be bronze-tipped at sunset, like flaming lance-heads, purple-shadowed at dawn in their secret hollows, when the white mist curled up and was licked away from the river, as the sun in its rising drew up to us the smell of sage-brush and hot dust? Would the tremendous high-piled clouds, so different from those in the east, hang motionless overhead until, borne lower and lower by their weight, they struck the flank of a hill, and were changed miraculously to an army of gray spearmen, bearing each a tilted gray spear, and sweeping slowly from our sight each series of rises until they overwhelmed us in turn, bounding the visible world to a narrow radius, moved forward with us? Would I know the insane love of terrific heights and depths, thin cold air, through whose transparency hot sunlight poured? Would there be new sensations, the prelude to which I had already faintly experienced this night? Drawn taut with a string of expectancy, woven of the promise of three months' intimacy with strange people in an unknown place, I fell asleep, later, as the thumping wheels pounded out,

"How many miles to Babylon?
Three-score miles and ten.
Can I get there by candle-light?
Yes, and back again."

THE FATAL JOURNEY

ELIZABETH BOTSFORD

 HERE had been a time when the world went only as far as the end of the street where the heavy trees moved together, and a horse and wagon disappeared strangely as though they had fallen into emptiness. It had been a small and comfortable world. The sun rose at one end and set at the other, apparently with no other purpose than to wake her in the morning and to send her to bed at night. No one else lived in the world but her mother and father and sister, the neighbors and half a dozen straying inquisitive dogs. Other people passed as shadows along the street, did not trouble her and left no trace upon her consciousness when they had gone. She had been completely satisfied with her world, with its soft lawns, dusty back fences and strawberry patches, with its empty lot, its trees and the row of cool dark houses whose doors stood always open to her. But even before she began, daringly, to add block after city block to her private world by timorous exploration and thrilling discovery; even before she recognized the blurred memories of woods steeped in shadows and of a yellow road over a hill, not as dreams but as realities,—the western end of the street had held her with a peculiar fascination. She had stood on the horse-block many times wondering what happened to the crippled postman when he limped past the last house that she could see, over the world's edge. There was nothing beyond. She could not conceive of things unseen existing. Yet the next morning he came back. Casually, too, as though to step over the end of things and return were nothing more unusual than to deliver mail at her front door. And the sun, every night, settled down softly into the trees and into that mysterious distance, drawing after it its slanting amber. The sun, too, came back in the morning unchanged. There was an inconsistency in her world which puzzled her vaguely. She had thought, holding her breath, of what would become of her if she walked westward until the street

dropped away beneath her feet, and then stepped *beyond*.

Before she had quite collected the courage to march away from her familiar yard on this perilous adventure, she was told that the world was round, twenty four thousand five hundred miles in circumference, and swarming with people. From then on it grew daily about her, it never ceased. It stretched out of her grasp proportionately as she learned more and more about it. It reached terrible dimensions. She was never just as happy as she had been when the world was only ten or twelve blocks long, with so few inhabitants that she knew them all.

There was always, however, the road west. It had now, with her vast knowledge of the city blocks, the miles, even the states that lay far along it, the most exciting possibilities. She imagined it running out over the bluffs past the farms and the towns that she knew now, across Minnesota which was tan on the school map, across yellow South Dakota into Montana. A long road curving around the elbow of a hill, dumping into an empty ravine and stretching out thin and breathless over wind-scraped prairies. Always following the sun. Night after night she watched the sun go down over this first mile or so of that infinite road, and it seemed to draw her westward as it gathered in its slow oblique light.

She began to learn about that far country, that it was open and full of sunlight, that beyond long prairies were mountains called the Rockies and they were many times larger than her Minnesota hills. She had stared at the bluffs across the river and had tried to imagine them reared up to immense heights. It was impossible. One day she had found a picture of a tall sharp crag with a patch of snow in the hollow of its shoulder and a lake at its feet that echoed its jagged height in a windless surface. And the sudden beauty had made her cold. She had hung it over her bed where she could see the moon upon it as she went to sleep, and where the sun lingered over it in the morning. It found a deep and secret place in her heart.

With an insatiable desire she began to amass her knowledge of this western land. She sat for hours over boldly covered novels, thick histories and biographies; and when she was interrupted she came back hundreds of miles and through many years to do as she was bid. She picked up the fragments of stories that men let fall from their lips

with careless tobacco smoke, hoarding them with the same indefatigable eagerness with which she hoarded pictures of cattle, cowboys, horses and wild game. The names of pioneers sang in her ears, and their gallant figures rode her imagination, booted and spurred. Dan'l Boone, Lewis and Clarke, Kit Carson and Fremont, Davy Crockett and Buffalo Bill—strange wayward figures whose Homeric deeds left her stirred and restless. Perhaps they wakened in her the blood tradition of her family which, on one hand, had brought her father's people from the comfortable eastern coast to the middle west early in the nineteenth century; and, on the other, had sent her mother's brother to the fickle climate of Montana where crops, cattle and sheep failed one after another but the ranchers stayed, half enchanted by the lonely inclement country. She did not know why she must go west. She only recognized that there was something within her clamouring to be satisfied, and that she would never be happy until she had followed the beckoning road that led past her own door.

It was more than romance that had obsessed her. Whenever she had looked at the picture over her bed, silence had fallen around her. The same perfect silence that she knew too well from the river, the soundless harmony of nature undisturbed and at peace, of all life in such exquisite and faultless vibration that the result was not sound—but silence, deep, mellow and precious. She had been too much alone as a child, perhaps ever to be happy with many people. She half resented them because they brought noise and confusion, shattering the spell which had fitted her into the pattern of nature so that she was conscious of herself only as part of a summer day, made of its heat and its slow sifting motion, falling through sunlight as a particle of dust, with that definiteness and completeness of existence. She had been torn from that charm to be brought up as a normal child, but the tatters of her other self were there reaching out to be welded again with nature. The silence of those remote mountains whispered promises of this fulfillment. (She had no thought of this at the time.)

Then, suddenly, she was fourteen. And at fourteen she went west, even beyond Dakota—to the Rockies. It was the culmination of years of an insistent desire, but she realized later that it was much more than that. It was the most

momentous thing in her life. All the night before they left, she could not sleep but lay awake in the dark trembling strangely, with some dim sense that an emptiness within her would soon be filled. She did not know why she should be so affected. There were still uppermost in her mind, the cherished romantic conceptions of the west. She did not analyze why she should feel physically weak with impatience, and sick with the intensity of her anticipation. She did not guess what the journey would mean, how much she would lose of contentment, and how much more she would gain. She finally slept, and dreamed of riding alone in a high still place.

* * * * *

Remembering her first journey west, the realization of its significance had followed slowly the sense impressions which remained in her mind too clear for peace, even years after. The full value and fatality grew upon her as time passed, gathering power as she gathered age, and heightening her memories until they filled her with an unbearable ache. She found that she was bound unalterably with that distant country by some tie that she could never fully comprehend. Each time she went back it tightened about her. She knew now that she would never be free from it. And although it seemed only yesterday that for the first time she had watched from a train window the dusty Dakota towns shrivel out of sight, this unvoiced tenuous sorrow of separation from the west had lain for an incalculable length of time in her heart.

She had been fourteen, that first unforgettable time. For her in that unwise carefree period of her life, there was glamour in the rhythmic whirr of train wheels, in dining cars and long green folds of a railroad ticket. And she was in a country twice enriched for her because of the years she had dreamed of it. Montana—lingering Spanish syllables, deep and poignant in their domination over her. She sat on the rear platform and tried to look both ways at once. They had left the willow green banks of the Milk River, the cattle grazing on low swells, the horses knee deep in water holes, crowded together to keep off flies with their restless tails. A rider along a sun-dried road waved his hat to her, and they left him behind quickly, riding at a jog trot to the small metal chatter of his spurs. The country rose with the climactic grace of a slowly rising wind. The green hills rolled up

to wooded foot-hills which, in turn, swept upward to the skyline abruptly. Behind the sharp fir heights was a pause of mist. . . . The train climbed, puffing.

She remembered, even, that they had eaten an early supper that day. From the dining car windows, she had watched the sun prostrate itself reverently in a dark-lavender bank of clouds. Then some one said with a strange note of joy in his voice—"Look, the mountains." And the clouds were not clouds at all. They began to take a definite and massive shape, moving forward out of a remote mist. Snow caps appeared with reluctant majesty, but their soft brilliance shifted like a chameleon. They had, with all their bulk, a fragility. She half expected them to fade away again like a mirage. "The mountains" another person repeated with a fading inflection of awe. So the weary out-rider of a wagon train must have murmured to himself when he first saw them shaping before him out of the haze, quietly opening up their deep beauty to recompense and comfort his fatigue. So he must have whispered, only more gratefully, she thought, before he flung back his triumphant shout to those who followed, blind with travel. "The mountains". . . She stared and could not comprehend. No one talked now, no one read or played his tired game of cards. All sat close to the windows, eagerly. The mountains had cast a religious spell over them all. The sun paused to lay its shining sacrifice on the high spotless alters and then, suddenly, was gone. The shadows crowded together like tall solemn monks.

The train crept slowly, abjectly, over forested plateaus to the foot of the mountains. She could feel the night air reaching timidly into the stuffy cars. The darkness came down with a sigh, and when they stopped at the station the moon was up, higher and clearer than she had ever known it before. (The memory of this was disturbingly sharp to her, bringing back the same physical exultation.) From the moment that she had stood on the wooden platform at Glacier that night years ago, she was never again the same person. She had stepped into some one's great cool arms. The darkness was flung about her like a crystalline cloak, and the fragrant virgin pines freshened by snow was a scarf for her throat. In the immense stillness the panting engine and the voices of men were lost, they were as pine needles falling through deep shadows. Before her the mountains reared

up broad shoulders and great bare heads. Without a word they greeted her generously. Without motion they took her into themselves.

She was fourteen. And there were the looming figures of Indians with beaded shirts and tall nodding feathers. She could hear the soft booming toms-toms staccatoing the wailing minor of Indian voices, and spurs trailing over the wooden steps. She could see a tall hat in the starlight or the metal ornament on a pair of chaps. Beyond the station a white pony glimmered in the dark, and the splotch of color on another's rump. There was the continuous melody of horses' hoofs on the hard road, the waver of fires in between the shadowy tepees of the Indian encampment. Always the swift clarity of the air filling her entire body. Impressions descended upon her keenly, etching themselves forever on her memory. (Even now, recalling that night, they returned to her, bodily, filling her with an ache of loneliness.) This one brief draught of mountain night alone had repaid her for the years of waiting.

There was a mountain outside her window. She could not sleep for watching how the trees grew blackly up its steep sides, and how it seemed to have long arms reaching down to draw her into their embrace. The dark wind laid its fingers on her heart and quickened a fever there. She did not guess, at the time, that she would never again be free of it. But outside was the promise of all she wished for in adventure and beauty. She slept finally to the rough murmuring of a stream. And while she slept, the moonlight sliding down from soundless heights to her bed, bound her to the mountains.

So she entered the dominion of silence.

* * * * *

Against the harmonious succession of days that had followed there were two personalities that she remembered with unusual clearness. One was Jimmie, a cowboy and their guide. You would not have noticed him without the ten gallon hat he wore, or his weather-scarred chaps. He was small, brown and quiet, and his voice had a soft slowness as though he talked much to himself. Astride a horse he gained the dignity of height, and his motion in the saddle understood the rhythm in the action of the quick gray horse he rode. He was a man of strange accomplishments. He

knew swift whirling tricks with the rope that hung at his saddle horn, he could toss horse shoes *left-handed* and beat her. Under his hand and spurs the most "ornery" horse forgot to buck, and yet his own pony came like a dog at his whistle. She had seen him roll a cigarette and light it with one match on a mountain pass where a horse staggered against the wind. He knew weird Blackfeet legends and old trail songs that had no beginning nor end. She could almost hear his sturdy nondescript voice and see him riding before her through the pungent brush that stood as high as his head.

"Oh, I am a Texas cowboy,
Far away from home,
If ever I get back to Texas
I never more will roam.

Montana is too cold for me
And the winters are too long;
Before the round-ups do begin
Our money is all gone."

And bending over his pony's neck at a steep scramble over rock ledges—

"Work in Montana
Is six months in the year;
When all your bills are settled
There is nothing left for beer."

High in the windy sunshine above the timber line—

"Come all you Texas cowboys
And warning take from me,
And do not go to Montana
To spend your money free.

But stay at home in Texas
Where work lasts the year around,
And you will never catch consumption
By sleeping on the ground."

There were innumerable verses, and many other songs of equal length. His memory was remarkable. One track in the mud was a story to him, and he could spot a mountain goat high on the rocks miles away. If he cursed fluently when the horses strayed into the jack pines and tangled

them selves in their reins, he remembered to say "ma'am" before a lady. He had herded cattle for the biggest ranch in Texas, and had broken three ribs at the Pendleton Round-up. If she had seen him in a crowd, she would not have looked at him twice. But she still saw him flapping his hat at her as he dead-headed some loose horses down an empty road, swinging to the light trot of his gray pony and grinning goodby. She would probably never meet him again, but she could not lose him.

With Jimmie she associated the strawberry roan, because Jimmie had led him up one morning for her to ride. "I've named him the 'Gentleman'" he said, and she knew from the tone of his voice that he liked the roan, "because he's the politest horse I've handled for a long time." It was the roan's first year on the mountain trails, (the brand was fresh and deep on his flank) and he remembered still the prairies and the freedom of his youth. A flat stretch lured him to a gallop, and there was a cock-sure swagger to his gait that steep switch-backs had not worn away. He had no claim to beauty. He was lean and raw-boned, scrawny at the neck and shaggy fetlocked; but he was lithe like a cougar, and as precise with his feet as a pianist is with his fingers. His coat was the color of dusty strawberries. He loved the long upward pull of the trail, the jagged corners over emptiness, the valley floors deep in grass where he could roll and run, and the buffeting mountain streams where a horse had to fight to keep his footing. He had a pleasant way of flicking back an ear attentively if you spoke to him. And no matter how long the day's travel, he was always ready to race for the home corral. She had ridden many horses since, but she did not forget the strawberry roan.

Strange—how vividly the sense impressions came back to her, more clearly than the memory of people that she had met. The waking up the first morning to the rattle of hoofs under her window, the impatient gallop of a horse straining on tight reins; the blanket of pine-cool air that lay over her bed; the sure thrilling knowledge of the day that was before her. She lived through that day again. Now it was symbolic for her.

The morning had been hard to bear, it was so beautiful. They found the dew thick upon the grass, the clear chill of night hanging reluctantly in the shadows and the mountains

sheering up from their feet breathlessly. Jimmie waited for them patiently, cocked on the hitching rail with dangling booted feet. Half a dozen ponies waited too, each tied by the reins to the other's saddle horn. The packs were fastened behind the cantles, the stirrups adjusted. Then the horses fell quietly into line behind Jimmie's small quick-moving gray, and they jogged out past the corrals, past the Indian encampment, past the ranger's shack to a slow swell of the mountain.

They climbed gradually through blossoming thickets and meadows of daisies and lupine, with a quiet squeak of saddle leather and the light thudding of hoofs on the springy trail. The wind from remote ice fields cleared the last wisps of sleep from their eyes. Outlines were clean and bold in the morning,—the abrupt ridge of the mountain, the jagged profile of a pine against the sky, the smooth gray curve of a boulder and the petals of a wild rose beside the trail. It was all real and tangible, all comprehensible to her in those early brilliant hours.

But soon conversation trailed away like a morning mist. They lost sight of the hotel roofs, pushing through the interlacing darkness of underbush and trees. The sunlight reached them in oblique smoky shafts, its warmth was remote and wavering. They were immersed in delicate forest night. She felt a change creeping over her as though the shadows were transforming her. She could not remember how she had rationalized that first bewildering sensation of re-encountering silence. Perhaps she was a ghost wandering dimly in a world of tapering heights. Perhaps she *was* real and this was only the passionate imagery of desires still unrealized, perhaps she was only dreaming that she was here. Or else she was a misfit, too concrete, too prosaic for this place where a pine needle falling was a single note in some immense melody of years. And it was only this—that within her something long dormant was struggling again for life, thrusting aside the neat barriers which society had set up against it and pouring forth into the slow light of the forest.

They rode on boldly.

She could not think any longer. A hundred sensuous impressions drowned thought and so permeated her body that always she could recall them as sharply, as physically as she had first experienced them. The sweet rankness of

dead pine needles, of ferns and mosses in blind hollows, of a redolent vine crushed under a horse's hoof. The cool wet smell of a stream reaching her even before the sound of its water, a cold splatter on her face as the horses wallowed through the deep of the ford. She felt again the strong movement of the roan between her knees, the quick sturdy action of head and haunches as he clambered up a steep turn. The sensation of being carried steadily higher and higher into sunlight and increasing heat.

Past the timber line the loose shale glared in the morning, over-grown in dark ragged patches with jack pines flattened down by endless winds. Far behind them the hotel roofs appeared again, and the thin shining line of the railroad. Eastward, Montana spread out like a relief map, the Bear Paws lost in a pallid blue haze. The trail led along the crest of the mountain. Here the hot sunlight was brilliant and hostile, the peaks closed in menacingly. For a terrible moment she felt absolutely alone, penetrating with colossal nerve an Olympian height. There had been nothing in her life to prepare her for this sudden revelation of distance, of tremendous beauty. She had been taught other dimensions, other values. For a brief space of time she was afraid. The little lessons she had learned could not explain this tall wind-burned peak, or the blue ranges that stood before her, holding tight to their hearts their deep emerald valleys and snow-rimmed lakes. And the nameless portion of her which understood, could not speak. She was only something alien in a sacred land, violating world-old laws of beauty and silence.

But cheerfully Jimmie led the way down the other side, along a narrow trail where the shale that a horse kicked over the edge fell a thousand feet down, where a lake at the bottom looked like a silver puddle. He even sang an old cowboy song, and the impudent smoke from his cigarette veered out over space. Valleys slid away beneath them. They edged upland meadows partially covered with ancient snow. One low cloud scuttled before them.

Noon was a reality, with the coffee boiling over a small fire, and the earth's strong arm under one's head. A stunted pine with sagging branches made a tent of shade and fragrance from the pressing warmth of the sun. She slept, and when she awoke the mountains had made peace with her and had taken her into their confidence. They offered them-

selves to her as a girl offers herself to her lover, showing her their most secret beauties. She had no fear now. Somehow while she had slept, that imprisoned part of her had escaped completely and had been made whole again. She was no longer herself. She was a puff of shadow on a bald crag, a finger of sunlight in dense pine branches, the froth of melted snow spilling down through steep grasses. She was one with the shale dust in high places that knew only sunlight. She was one with the shining beaded loam that an old tree uprooted when it fell. She had been born when these were born. She could not die while they remained. . . . While she had slept she had regained her heritage.

The afternoon passed dimly, in a golden haze. She remembered long trails twisting downward, the soft chill that stretched a hand up to her compassionately as they neared the tree line again, and the plunge from sunlight into shadow. There were vague impressions of the dappled rump of a fawn disappearing into a thicket, a bear's awkwardness as it lumbered across the trail, the chatter of a red squirrel on a log, magnified in the silence. The constant rush of a waterfall, muffled by trees. She had so expanded and merged into her surroundings that she filled this world, knowing it all, part of its perfection. . . . She existed only in her realization of her own existence. . . . The sunlight shrank until it touched only the tree tops, the scarred crags. . . . and paused tremulously.

The horses were tired. They moved slowly and patiently, but once on the thick green floor of the valley they broke into a shuffling trot. A deep sapphire lake appeared miraculously with the mountains rearing up to enormous peaks around it like tall guards standing over a priceless treasure. A few shacks huddled in their heavy shadows. Coolness bathed her face and throat. Her horse nickered and shook into a canter.

The night came down with an infinite gracious silence, fitting into every crevice and hollow. There was a hush as if the lake and mountains were waiting. The stars were bright points of expectancy. Then slowly the moon rose, flushed and full, and came to the darkness. The water washed softly along the rocky beach, a fish broke the surface and the night flatly. From a moon-lit meadow fell a slow clink-clink as the bell mare moved in her grazing.

She went to sleep with a new knowledge of peace.

All night the moon wheeled over her, holding her in his magnetic silver gaze. And though her body slept, *she* watched the moon lay his pale hand beneficently on one peak after another, and withdrawing it tenderly, leave them to the still blue dawn that followed, lifting up his dark train. She saw the dew pour upward into the grass and hang quivering to the imperceptible rhythm of the earth. She knew how the mountains drew the night about them, loving it, and then tossed back the black robes splendidly to meet the day that sidled over the plains to fawn upon their somber majesty. And how the sun rushed upon them with long golden strides.

* * * * *

The days passed, and the weeks. She had found again the happiness of a child, the wise joy that is one's birth right. It did not seem that this could end, any more than it was possible that season should not follow season, merging and changing but continuing endlessly, faultlessly. She lived, breathing deeply. All that bound her in the fetters that men inflicted upon themselves, she recognized dimly and accepted as inevitable; but for herself, she was free. She had lost all conception of time and circumstance. She was completely in harmony with nature, keen to its beauty and to its sanctity, unconsciously filled with its eternity.

* * * * *

But the end came, like a blow in the face. And when she climbed into the hot train again, she felt that she was dying. She took one long look at the mountains. They stood as she had seen them that first night, with their arms open wide. The cool wind was seaching for her throat, the moonlight was waiting for her shadow, and the trails resting for the slow hoofs of her horse. And she would not be with them to know their great enchantment. She looked deeply that she might keep the memory forever.

The train swayed downward to the plains and the night hid the mountains from her straining eyes. She was gone before she knew her sorrow for a reality. She has left the silent altars where she had worshipped in tranquillity. They were for other eyes now, and other hearts. They were for the day and night to know and love. She would be forgotten as a passing wind is forgotten when it has ceased to stir the sharp points of the pines. She was gone, body and mind,

all of her that had a name, back to the intricacies of a man-made world. But something remained, something that had been set free into the golden depths of a mountain noon. This strange, inexplicable part of her clung to the heavy grass of valleys, to the spray from an impetuous stream, and was still alive in the dripping sunlight of the day and in the pause, the kneeling pause of the night. It left a nameless pain where it had been, close to her heart. She guessed, prophetically, that the pain would always be there, that she had reached a perfect happiness which she would not find elsewhere. That wherever she went, whatever she did, these memories would follow her to torment her with their flawlessness. She would go back to the river, to the quiet Minnesota hills and they would not satisfy her. She would ride empty country roads and feel only the contrast. She had paid an enormous price for her joy and her religion. It had been a fatal journey from which she returned forever changed. But she had been close to the fundamentals and the truth of life. She had achieved a complete harmony of existence. The experience and the memories were worth the sacrifice.

She knew all this. And it was so.

INHERITANCE

SALLIE S. SIMONS

I have a chain from you,
Of red-gold, four times linked—
It lies in long fluent coils in my hand,
Light, almost without substance;
But when its meshes, falling, interwine,
I start at the muted sound within them,
A sound as of flat brasses struck in a Burmese temple
Years ago when it was found.
I have a chain from you whom I can never see,
But whom I know.

THIRTEEN

ERNESTINE GILBRETH

JANE slipped on her pajamas and yawned loudly. She was half-aware of Josephine already in bed and looking expectantly toward the light. Josephine evidently would be in no mood for conversation.

The house was entirely silent. Margaret the younger sister, had gone to her room and was doubtless undressed. Her light no longer sent a long yellow stream down the hall rug. There was no sound, not even the faint snoring that usually followed one of her "staying-up-nights".

"Margaret must be asleep." Josephine spoke gently.

"Perhaps, but I doubt it. Anyhow she looked very well tonight, didn't she! That blue dress is quite good; it hides most of the scrawniness. Thirteen's such a grotesque age!" Jane hunched her knees up to her chin and stared thoughtfully at her mules. "Give her a couple of years, and a lot of those embryonic hang-overs should disappear completely."

"Awfully strange kid," Josephine's voice betrayed a certain pride. "She acts years older than we do and seems to have such a good time doing it."

"She thinks she's wiser, at any rate. It's going to drive me crazy one of these days. One teaspoon of contempt added to a cup of severity and you produce the adolescent atrocity, your growing-girl-sage. Some day I'm just going to kill her!"

Josephine was trying unsuccessfully to keep her eyes open. "Listen, I'm awfully tired tonight. But I tell you this, she's much more interesting than we ever were; she has a much better time too. There's something rather magnificent about her intensity, if you don't mind."

They were silent for a minute, both aware of an unpleasant discordance, of the barrier that a discussion of Margaret was sure to produce. If only Josephine wouldn't always take her side, defend her. Well, one of these days perhaps she would understand, perhaps

tonight, any time now—Jane began to look mysterious, immensely pleased with herself.

From downstairs a clock sounded eleven dull beats. The vibrations echoed up and down the hall. Silence followed. Jane had stiffened and was holding one long finger to her lips. Glaring with pleasure, she waited expectantly.

Someone had begun to speak, complaining bitterly in a gruff and unpleasantly nasal voice. The sound came directly from Margaret's room, from the vicinity of her bed.

Josephine jumped to attention and began a frantic search for her negligée. But Margaret's voice followed reassuringly. "But my dear, you must realize that I'm doing the very best I can. Just you go to sleep now George, and I'll tend to it in the morning."

George seemed to refuse to be silent. In spite of Margaret's tearful pleadings, her poor "Hushes", he continued to scold and criticize. Josephine listened, her eyebrows contracting with horror. Margaret and a man—that child—

Jane had ducked into her pillow and was laughing in great gulps of joy. "George! Isn't that the sweetest name? You know, really, it's just my favorite. He's Margaret's brain-child, no less, and exactly three nights old. She gave birth to him on Saturday, and I've been chaperoning them ever since."

Josephine was beginning to understand. "The little devil. My God, how does she ever manage that perfectly fearful voice? It sounds like a radiator dragged around the room, clankety, clank clank. Of course I'll try to be hospitable to him, but why couldn't the kid have thought of someone more attractive?"

"A brother-in-law and a half, if you ask me. I always did hate the name "George". Say, he certainly personifies the overworked bureau of complaints. I haven't heard him approve of one single thing in this house. You should have heard him crabbing about the dessert for yesterday's lunch, and even that new blue evening dress of mine. As for his remarks on Mother and Dad—I was positively shocked, really I was. It's not Margaret's fault, you understand; she wears herself out defending everything and everybody. I think she's a bit ashamed of him already. The man's simply outspoken and decidedly bad-tempered. As for his voice—"

They listened a minute, grinning with amusement.

"Catch that one, Jane," Josephine was softly clapping her hands. "He believes that Margaret should pack up and leave home this very night. Nobody around here appreciates her—"

"He does, does he?" But Margaret's whimpering, her desperate pleading seemed to submerge everything else. "But my dear, you don't seem to understand. They don't mean a bit of it, really they don't. If you knew them as I—"

"The poor boob. I'll bet he wears checked suits and a derby." Josephine jerked her head with satisfaction.

"It doesn't matter what he wears, "Jane's temper flared through her cheeks. "The point is, I'm damn sick of this sort of thing. It's not the first time, you know. I'm just ready to wring George's neck, and Margaret's too, for that matter! Lord, what we've been through lately! You remember the religious craze certainly, and the cross she used to hoist up on a pole every single morning. It was funny for a while."

"But the best was Abbie. Don't you remember—our little colored sister? Margaret was perfectly right too. She couldn't have her in the house, with Mother and Dad feeling as strongly as they did—"

Of course not. Margaret explained that very carefully. But she did collect all the old dresses and make picnic lunches. Why, she just wore herself out. It was a "very-real-devotion," shall we say?"

"You got rid of Abbie somehow, didn't you, Jane? I've forgotten, but it was very clever. I've never heard her mentioned since."

"No, she died, I believe, after one of the picnic lunches. But the lonely place has now been filled to overflowing—"

"By one royal gripe named—George."

"Named George?" Jane made a violent face. "And I'm tired of him too, dead tired. You haven't been kept awake for three nights running; this is no time for being humane. Come on, action is what I crave. I won't have that man around here. I tell you, he simply infuriates me."

Josephine was calm. "But certainly your sense of humor—No? Well then, I think you're acting like a fool. After all, you know, we're at a disadvantage, overhearing--'loves sweet complaints' and all-that rot."

"Overhearing, nothing!" Jane was almost writhing. "You know very well the kid's trying to be subtle. Why, she

wanted us to listen. Wasn't that cute? No it was not! Too darned obvious. I won't stand it either."

Josephine had become bored. "Well, just remember she's only thirteen and probably having a hell of a good time. She'll get tired of the whole thing pretty soon and chuck George out. Turn off that light now and stop being temperamental." She squinted her eyes shut with an air of finality.

Jane stared at her a minute with blazing eyes. "All right." She began to mimic furiously. "Just you go to sleep now, George, and I'll tend to it in the morning. You bet I'll *tend* to it—"

She sat upright for a minute, smiling with satisfaction.

But Margaret's voice sounded sweetly from the direction of the hall. "Yes, I always believe in talking things over.. Now my dear, don't you worry a minute more—tomorrow's always a new day."

ONE AFTERNOON

EMILIE HEILPRIN

PICKETT and Pock and Bramble were having a holiday, so they planned a picnic.

As they walked along through the city, on the way to a certain meadow outside the town, they saw a large crowd in the street. They went up to see what it was.

It was a most unusual and unheard of thing for a modern day and age. A wandering harpist stood in the center of a gaping group. He was an aged, small man, like an elf two or three sizes too large. And because his eyes were black and mocking, all the young folks liked him. Because his smile was slow and crinkly, all the children liked him. The older people liked him also, because he knew the by-gone songs of their youth, such as "Kelly's Blue Necktie," "Pretty Little Thing", and so on.

Bramble liked the Harpist for the way his hands twinkled in and out among the harp strings. But she would have preferred him to play something other than the favorite songs of past youth. She said as much.

"Oh", said the Harpist, "So you don't like these songs?"

"No sir," answered Bramble.

The old player began to strum out some very modern jazz, to the delight of the young people. Bramble, however, looked annoyed, and Pickett and Pock looked cross.

"How did you like that?" the Harpist asked them when he had finished.

"Not at all." they answered.

"Ah," remarked the Harpist, and his eyes sparkled blacker than ever, "You are difficult to suit. But is there no quiet spot where I can play for you?"

"Yes," spoke Pock quickly, "Bramble is taking us now."

"Then let's be off." said the Harpist. But first he bowed solemnly to the crowd, pocketed the nickels they had collected and strapped his harp over his back. After this, the four of them marched away.

"Pock and I didn't mean to be rude," apologized Bramble as they walked along. "It was just that—"

"No offense," broke in the Harpist gaily. "In fact, quite the opposite."

"Why then, do you mean you don't like those songs yourself?" queried Bramble.

"My business" replied the Harpist, "is to give pleasure. Having pleased every one else today, I shall now try to please you."

"What you play for us must be awfully different," said Pickett, not meaning to be conceited.

The Harpist smiled. "This must be the quiet spot," he said. "It looks just right."

They were in a wheat field which resembled a golden, tossing ocean. It was the sun and the wind which had worked the magic of this; the sun burnishing the grain brilliantly, and the wind billowing through it, till it had turned to gleaming waves. Farther back, out of this riotous sea, rose a hill, like a gaunt, black ship. The sky hung very close above, so that you could have poked a hole through it with your fist. To do this, you would have had to stand on the tip of the hill.

The three children curled up in the most golden part. The Harpist sat bolt upright beside his instrument. He began to play, making slight motion with his arms, and only his fingers twinkling among the harp strings, as sunlight twinkles through the bars of a gate.

* * * * *

How long he played, Bramble could never tell. If it seemed a hundred years, that is not to be wondered at, for a summer's afternoon can be filled with a century of mellowness. And the solemn minutes flow by too burdened with joy to count for less than hours. So the Harpist played for years, if you please, or for one afternoon. Pickett and Pock and Bramble lay motionless, listening thirstily. And as they listened, they watched the grace of wind-blown grasses, and the faint, taut veil of the sky and the constant, weaving fingers of the old man. And they forgot many things they had once known, but they also remembered others.

Bramble fell into a soft, deep peace.

Pock murmured, "Bramble has gone to sleep." And Pickett answered, "She might be the Sleeping Princess. Do you think she'll lie here till a hedge grows around her?"

"Hush," whispered the Harpist as he went on playing. But Bramble did not hear them.

* * * * *

For she was lying on her back, torpid with lovely sensation, as cats grow torpid with sunlight. She was trapped in a hopeless, mad tangle of thought, sound, sight and scent; the tangle that has baffled men since the beginning of consciousness. It is in striving to untangle this snarled network, that all the poetry of the world has been achieved. A poem is only one deftly-found loose end. Bramble, lying still, had not the strength nor skill to untangle, but only to wrap herself thickly in the fine meshes of its splendour.

It seemed to her that the sky and the grass and the trees and the rocks were made up of music; that each could be dissolved into a special song which was the fabric of its being; that the universe was expainable at last, as a total symphony in which all things played their individual parts, solid bodies like rocks, with the condensed weight of ponderous themes, and intangible bodies like air, with the heavenly lightness of ethereal themes. It needed but a note, the right note, to melt the world into symphony and rhythm.

Rythm was the motive power of all things. It was the reason people continued to progress and struggle, when all odds were against them. It was the reason men kept marching when their tired feet became gashed with blood. It was reason enough for life.

Bramble became lapped in serenity, like a soft, warm blanket. The wind, with long, gentle fingers, ruffled her hair. The sun beat through her body as though she were made of cloud.

All the afternoon the Harpist played, his melodies changing and blending as exquisitely as colors are blended in the plumage of birds. At one time, Pickett got up and began to dance, imitating the swaying of the wheat, for the Harpist had matched his playing exactly to the wind's tune. And Poek, at one time, began to shout, for the Harpist had imitated the quick tatoo of drums. And Bramble, once, began to sing, for she couldn't keep her joy to herself, there was such an excess of it. The Harpist smiled a crinkly, slow smile when he saw them.

Then suddenly he stopped and said, "Are you pleased?" The children blinked at him, but had no words to tell of their

pleasure. He understood and said,

"I'll race you to the top of that hill. One—two—three—"

Off they went. There was never in a hundred years such a fast, light race. The four seemed to bound with swift leaps all the way up the gaunt black hill. When they reached the top, they found a sunset.

The Harpist said,


"Now I'll play you one more song:" and he played them the theme of Running, which is one of the greatest themes known to man. On the last note he smiled another slow smile and said,

"It is getting late."

So the three children started down one side of the hill, for town, turning back often to wave to the Harpist. He too, when they had disappeared into the distance, started down the hill. But his path lay in the opposite direction.

CHOPPING WOOD

ELIZABETH SHAW

HE leaden sky pressed heavily down, seeming to rest on the tops of the dun coloured hills. The air was raw and moist, cold, but oppressive to breathe, and absolutely still. In the yard the old man was chopping wood. Under his axe the block was scarred and cracked by the blows of three generations, but it still stood steady, resisting his powerful attacks. Confused by the echoes that came back from the hills, the sounds of his chopping were continuous, repeating themselves indistinctly over and over. Grasping the heavy axe handle his hands were red, ridged with veins, and distorted with lumpy muscles and joints. As Rosie watched him from the window she fluted the edge of the torn curtain between her fingers, wondering at the still powerful shoulders that pulled the old drab sweater at every blow. His cheeks were red with a network of tiny veins and from under the boy's cap he wore pulled down over his ears hung a thick fringe of yellowish white hair. He had a heavy white curly beard. Rosie pulled at the edge of the curtain. Gramp had certainly chopped a lot of wood that afternoon. He liked to work, of course, but it hardly seemed right that he, an old man who should be sitting in front of the fire, should do as much as all that.

From the kitchen came the sound of someone walking gently around. That was Gammy. Rosie had hoped that she would sleep until supper time but Gammy always slept lightly, and Rosie didn't wonder at all that chopping waking her up. 'Twould wake the dead, the noise it made. Presently the kitchen door opened and Gammy poked her head out.

"Rosie" she piped, "be you there?"

"Yes, Gammy, I'm here."

"Where's Gramp?" Gammy came farther into the room as she spoke. She was very short and almost bald, her brown head showing through the carefully combed strands of gray hair. Her face was like an old nut, wizened and covered with

a myriad of wrinkles, and her head nodded a little as she talked.

"Can't you hear him, Gammy?" Rose answered rather impatiently. "You ain't deaf. He's out choppin' again. He'll kill himself with all them logs." Gammy stepped to the window and rapped on it with her knuckles. Gramp drove his axe through the piece he was splitting and looked up. He grinned at her, displaying discoloured toothless gums and waved his hand still bent to the shape of the axe handle, and then turned to pick up another log.

"Time to come in, Gramp," Gammy called shrilly.

"He can't hear you way out there. Do you want me to go out an' fetch him in? He probly won't come for me but I'll try. He'll be all wore out if he keeps on choppin' like that."

"So do," Gammy agreed, her head bobbing more vigorously, "So do." Rosie went into the kitchen, pushed the kettle forward on the stove, and went out the back door. In the dull air she paused shivering, folding her arms tightly before her and huddling into herself. She was a tall bony woman of about fifty, her iron gray hair pulled back into a tight knob at the back of her head. In the yard were two piles of wood, one split and one unsplit; there was a saw horse, and under it a pile of raw yellow sawdust. Beside it stood the chopping block and the old man wedging his axe into a half-split log.

"Gramp" called Rosie, "It's gettin' too dark to see, you'd better come in."

"Pretty soon, Rosie," he answered, "Ain't I done a lot of work?"

"You done enough now, you'd better come in."

"Pretty soon, Rosie, pretty soon." Then suddenly querulous, "I ain't hurtin' any one out here, Why don't you leave me be? I'll be in pretty soon, pretty soon."

"Oh, all right, Gramp. Don't get mad at me. Gammy sent me out to tell you." But Gramp was not listening any more and her voice was drowned in the thud of wood and its sharp splitting sounds. She was really cold now and walked quickly back over the frozen ground to the kitchen door. Inside Gammy had seated herself in an old rocking chair, her eyes had closed and she had fallen again into one of her light dozes. But at Rosie's step she opened her eyes.

"Ain't he comin' in?" she demanded. "They ain't no need for him to chop that a way."

"He knows it, Gammy, but he's just got his mind set on it and they ain't nothin' you can do. He's terrible set on things it seems now-a-days." But this criticism was too much for Gammy.

"Ain't you shamed to talk of your Pa that way, Rosie? He ain't neither too set on things. He'll be ninety this year and they ain't any one round as old as thet who kin chop wood like him. He's as spry as the day you was born." But Rosie was not listening. Imperceptibly the darkness had been increasing until now the corners were blocked with black shadows. Rosie was taking the smoke chimney off the lamp on the table, she shook it to see if there was any oil in it, turned up the charred wick and lit it. With a yellow gleam it flared up, making long points of shadow on the floor. Outside the chopping had ceased and dull sounds of wood against wood told the two women that Gramp was stacking the wood. Rosie opened the stove and put in two sticks from the wood box beside it. They crackled softly as Gammy creaked back and forth in the old rocker. Slamming down the stove cover with the falsely efficient air she always assumed when taking care of the slatternly kitchen, Rosie remarked to Gammy:

"Guess I'll go out and see if they's any eggs for supper." Gammy did not answer and Rosie left the room, going out through damp, cold, back passages to the shed where in the dry darkness the drowsy roosting fowls emitted sleepy clucks and gurgling noises. Reaching her hand skillfully under the feathers of the setting hens she felt the warm ovals of the eggs and pulled them out in spite of the sleepy remonstrances. Four eggs—that wasn't a great many, but you couldn't expect the fowls to lay much this time of year. Holding them carefully she went back to the kitchen, wondering if Gramp had given up his foolishness and come in.

As soon as Rosie had left the kitchen Gammy had slid out of her chair and walked stiffly across to the door. She opened it and looked out into the darkness, but her eyes blinded by the lamp-light, could see nothing, "Pa", she called in a wavering voice, abandoning the "Gramp" that with the advent of the first grandchildren had become his name, "Pa, where be you? Come in, its gettin' dark." From beside the

wood-piles came the cheerful answer. "Don' you worrit, Ma, I'll be right in. I just aim to lay these last logs. I've split nigh a cord of wood altogether. You go in, you'll ketch cold." Gammy went slowly back and shut the door just as Rosie came back into the kitchen.

"You ben callin' him agin, Gammy? Wun't he come in yit? What ails him any how? He never used ter act like this; old men don't chop wood an' work all day long. They should set by the fire and rest, they never can tell when they'll need their strength," Rosie spoke mournfully, "He may drop dead any day." Gammy began to whimper. "I don't know what ails him. He's that set! Oh, Lordy!" Just then Gramp came in. He set his axe in the corner of the room and going to the sink pumped some cold water on his hands, rubbing them with yellow soap, saying nothing to the two women. Rosie had been setting three plates and some bread and butter on the table, now she took the eggs off the stove where they had been boiling and broke them into three white cups which she put on the table. In silence the three sat down to eat. Gramp cut off great wedges of bread which he piled with butter and *gummed* efficiently, while Gammy's egg ran in little yellow streaks over her chin. Presently the old man looked up. "Ain't they no baked beans in the house, Rosie?" he demanded "Seems to me that this is pretty slim pickings for a man who's been choppin' all day."

"No, they ain't, an' if they were you shouldn't have any. You oughtn't to eat baked beans. They ain't good for a man of your age. An' I shouldn't be proud of that choppin' neither. It ain't right for you to work like that. What would anybody think if they saw you?" The old man said nothing. Rosie got up and carried the dishes over to the sink, coming back for the lamp, which she placed on a shelf over her head leaving the two old people in comparative darkness. She began to wash the dishes in the cold water, then she took a cup and made a little tea in it which she gave to Gammy, who drank it noisily. Presently Gramp rose and tramped up stairs. They heard him take off his boots and put them heavily on the floor, and then the springs of his bed groaned and squeaked under his weight.

As soon as he had gone up, Gammy turned to Rosie.

"Why don't you hide his axe, Rosie, then he can't chop tomorrer?"

"He'll be awful mad", but Rosie had crossed over and held the heavy axe meditatively in her hand.

"Oh, Lordy, Lordy, I know it," the old woman moaned to herself, "but Rosie, he'll kill himself choppin'; old men can't chop like that. Hide it down cellar, praps if he don't see it in the mornin' he'll forget about it." Rosie picked it up and went down cellar. When she came up again Gammy was asleep. She woke her and they both went up to bed.

The next morning Rosie was waked early, Gramp was calling her.

"Rosie! Rosie! Where's my axe? What you done with my axe? Rosie, wake up an' come down here, someone's stole my axe! Where is it, Rosie?"

"Lordy, Gramp, I dunno. What do you want to chop for this early in the morning anyhow? Don't yell so, you'll wake Gammy." But Rosie rolled out of bed and putting on an old coat, went down stairs. The old man's face was suffused with blood and he was breathing hard.

"You done something with my axe, Rosie. Tell me where it is, I gotter have my axe. Where is it?"

"I tol' you I dunno. You don't want to chop now anyhow. Sit down an' I'll make you some coffee".

"I want my axe, I want my axe. What you done with it Rosie? You think I'm too old to chop, you hide my axe, you lie to me. Where is it? I'm a-going to chop wood till I die, I ain't old, I'm strong enough to chop. What you done with my axe? Give it to me, gimme my axe." He staggered forwards towards Rosie, his face purple and his blue eyes popping and blood-shot. "Gimme my axe, gimme my axe, gimme—" He lurched forward grasping at Rosie, and fell face downward on the floor, where he lay breathing stertorously. Rosie looked at him dully, then opened the door and ran out through the yard onto the road, muttering to himself. "I must get doc quick. I allus knew he'd kill hisself, doing so much chopin'. He should have sat by the fire and saved his strength. I said to Gammy last night, he should, I said he might fall dead, and now he has. I told him he didn't ought to chop so much." Her bedroom slippers flopped as she ran along the frozen road, breathing fast. Upstairs Gammy woke, listened for the chopping, and hearing none, sighed with relief and fell asleep again.



BOOK REVIEWS



THE HAMLET OF A. MACLEISH

Houghton Mifflin Co. 1928

We were informed a few weeks ago in one of those competitive literary conversations in which each individual tries to outdo the other in announcements and criticisms, that Archibald MacLeish had written a *Hamlet*. We were somewhat horrified by this apparent sacrilege at the altar of the great literary deity, and since the conversation swept on relentlessly and would not permit our frantic questions, we ran down to the Bookshop, at the earliest opportunity, to see for ourselves if Mr. MacLeish were actually guilty of such a presumption. The title of his new book quieted our perturbed spirits. It was not *Hamlet* by Archibald MacLeish. It was *The Hamlet of A. MacLeish*. We realized a distinction, and with relief carried the book home to read at leisure,

Mr. MacLeish's daring is only to be gussed at from the title of his book. For centuries critics have puzzled over the mystery of Hamlet, have sensed his dark and troubled heart, and have written down their faltering interpretations. For centuries those who read *Hamlet* or saw it enacted before them, have felt the timelessness of the Shakespearean protagonist, and, projecting themselves into his being, have found their sense of the incomprehensibility of life voiced through his eloquent lips. Many felt a kinship with the ghost-ridden Hamlet of the sixteenth century, but no other has dared to name his bitter experience his own *Hamlet*.

Archibald MacLeish recognized in himself, as in the Danish prince, the consciousness of the sinister and the intangible evil in the world, of the "dreams" that haunt the sensitive soul of a man who, by reflection, seeks an adequate answer to his insistent questions. He parallels his own exis-

tence with the tragedy of a man of an older time, knowing that his fears and misgivings, his attempts to rationalize and understand have lain a long time in the hearts of men. The outward manifestations of these intimations of evil that man is heir to may change, but fundamentally they are the same.

"No man living but has seen the king his father's ghost, None alive that have had words with it. Nevertheless the knowledge of ill is among us and the obligation to revenge, and the natural world is convicted of that enormity. . . .

In the old time men spoke and were answered and the thing was done clean in the daylight. Now it is not so."

The ghost comes directly to the Shakespearean Hamlet and lays before him in plain words the crime that has been done. The evil is translated into concrete terms. But for the Hamlet of A. MacLeish the revelation comes haltingly—

"There have been men a long, long time that knew this.

The words come to us

Far, faint in our ears, confused. They have told us of
Signs seen by night and the vanishing signals. They
have told of the ominous

Stir over the leaves and the showing among them of
Mysteries hiding a dark thing. . . ."

And for him there is no answer.

By this parallel Mr. MacLeish has made a striking contrast of the eternal problem of a thoughtful man in two widely separated ages; one embodied in actuality, the other forever evasive, and complicated by the over-rationalization of the minds in which it is conceived. That is, the Hamlet of this day may no longer believe in ghosts. He can explain them away just as he can explain the immediate causes of evil, of passion, and of dreams, with his vast scientific knowledge. But he is still haunted by ghosts. There is still for him the blind struggle of the Shakespearean hero translated into the abstract, the conflicts of emotion, the sense of the bleak overwhelming secret of the universe.

We may detect in Archibald MacLeish's presentation of his conception certain familiar modernistic tendencies. These we would criticize mainly on the ground that they are too conventional of this period for a piece of work which, although itself characteristic of this century, has also an element of timelessness. The greatest art is that which escapes from the pattern of its age toward universality. But

over and above these occasional influenced passages stands the impassioned sincerity of the whole poem, which is enough in itself. There is no pose or affectation of feeling, but rather a terrible frankness which scorns half measures and implications, coupled with penetrating thought which is half divination. We find, as in *Streets of the Moon*, great beauty of description and a delicate detail of phrasing, here electrified by the tremendous force of the emotion behind it. Mr. MacLeish's imaginative conceptions are expressed with remarkable concreteness and symbolism—

“Ha, but the sun among us. . . wearers of
Black cloths, bearers of secrets!
The jay jeer of the sun in the ear of our
Pain. . . and the nudge of the blunt pink
Thumb troubling the pride of despair in us. . .
Ha, but the sun in our air.”

It is this ability of his to put the nameless suggestions of his own mind into forms in which we may recognize their dim significance, which has made possible the success of his attempt of his *Hamlet*. This is his ghost—

“Much of the time I do not think anything;
Much of the time I do not even notice
And then, speaking, closing a door, I see
Strangely as though I almost saw now, some
Shape of thing I have always seen, the sun
White on a house and the windows open and swallows
In and out of the wallpaper, the noon's face
Faint by day in a mirror; I see some
Changed thing that is telling, something that almost
Tells—and this pain then, then this pain. And no
Words, only these shapes of things that seem
Ways of knowing what it is I am knowing.”

His diction is curiously compact without giving any sense of being over-crowded. The history of man, “the Cloth-Clad Race, the People of Horses,” lies in a few brief lines—

“Westward they move with the sun. Their smoke hangs
Under the unknown skies at evening. The stars
Go down before them into the new lands.
Behind them the dust falls, the streams flow clear again,
Vultures rise from the stripped bones in the sand.

.

They dwell at the last shores. Years pass. They vanish.

They disappear from the light leaving behind them
Names in the earth, names of trees and of boulders,
Words for the planting of corn, leaving their tombs to
Fall in the thickets of alders, leaving their fear
Of the howling of dogs and the new moon at the shoulder,
Leaving the shape of the bird god who delivered
Men from the ancient ill, and under the loam their
Bronze blades, the broken shafts of their javelins.
They vanish. They disappear from the earth.

And the sea falls

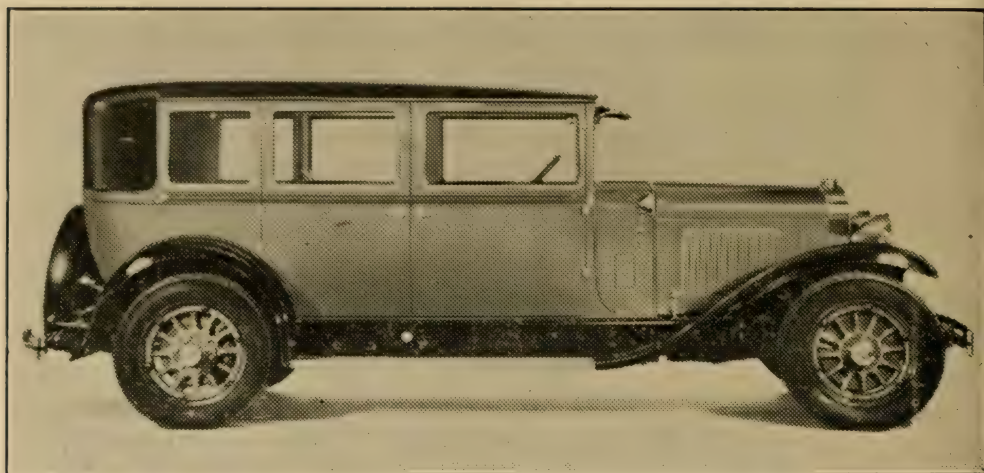
Loud on the empty beaches

and above.....

The king rises. Lights, lights, lights!"

It is difficult to put one's finger on that actual quality of Mr. MacLeish's poetry which embodies so completely his ideas. It is not merely the careful facility of his lines. It is a quality to be felt rather than to be put into words, lying in the force of the generative emotion and its lasting intensity. We feel this best when Mr. MacLeish keeps closely to his original theme. The violence of the scene in the Queen's Closet, which we understand (we would not have realized it, had we not been told) is directed against the "swell guy" of the literary world, is discordant because it is too reminiscent of the kind of violence one finds in Webster or Tourneur in the sixteenth century. While opposed to it, the scene at Ophelia's burial is done with a great sincerity which is infinitely more moving than the excessive brutality of the former passage. We feel that when Archibald MacLeish is least influenced and most himself, he writes poetry of extraordinary beauty of conception and expression.

An analysis of the tragic effect of Mr. MacLeish's Hamlet and of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is justifiable since they are dominated by a common theme, and illuminating since it reveals that the former cannot truly be called tragic. Shakespeare ends his play on a note of serenity, of a sudden calm. Hamlet, at last, achieves his revenge and, though he dies in so doing, he is triumphant in his conquest of evil. Peace, justice and human equanimity are restored. True to the Aristotelian demand, pity and fear resolve into a peace of mind which recognizes in the magnificence of his own soul the ultimate answer to man's questionings. *The Hamlet of A. MacLeish*, on the other hand, ends little farther than where



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it began, with an acceptance of life that is a confession of man's impotence. And with the reiteration of his presentiment—

“Thou wouldst not think

How ill all's here about my heart.”

We close the book with that same illness in our hearts, and realize that we have been convinced by Mr. MacLeish's passionate words. The impression remains. Our consciousness of the guilt of the world has been aroused, but there is no restoration of peace and order to complete the katharsis of our emotions.

Mr. Krutch in his essay *The Tragic Fallacy* in the November *Atlantic Monthly* informs us that tragedy is no longer possible for us of the twentieth century, that we can no longer conceive it and will soon lose even our ability to appreciate it. He says that, in comparing a modern so-called tragedy such as *Ghosts* and a play of Sophocles or Shakespeare, the question “is not primarily one of art, but of the worlds which two minds inhabited. No increased powers of expression, no greater gift for words, could have transformed Isben into Shakespeare. The materials out of which the latter created his work—his conception of human dignity, his sense of the importance of human passions, his vision of the amplitude of human life—simple did not and could not exist for Ibsen, as they did not and could not exist for his contemporaries. God and Man and Nature had all somehow dwindled in the course of the intervening centuries, not because the realistic creed of modern art led us to seek out mean people, but because this meanness of human life was somehow thrust upon us by the operation of that same process which led to the development of realistic theories of art by which our vision could be justified.”

Our world, having no faith in man, rationalizing him out of his once magnificent possibilities, can no longer conceive a true tragedy which is “essentially an expression, not of despair, but of the triumph over despair and of confidence in the value of human life.” Our too sophisticated society “has outgrown not merely the simple optimism of the child, but also that vigorous, one might almost say adolescent, faith in the nobility of man which marks a Sophocles or a Shakespeare,—has neither fairy tales to assure it that all is always

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right in the end nor tragedies to make it believe that it rises superior in soul to the outward calamities which befall it.

"Distrusting its thought, despising its passions, realizing its impotent unimportance in the universe, it can tell itself no stories except those which make it still more acutely aware of its trivial miseries."

Mr. Krutch's essay seems particularly a propos of Archibald MacLeish's new book. The title, *The Hamlet of A. MacLeish*, lead us to infer that it is tragedy and to be considered as such. Therefore, while the parallel of thought throughout is of great significance, the change in the end of Mr. MacLeish's poem, the failure to fulfill the requirements of true tragedy by some katharsis of emotions,—may have even greater significance. It may be, as Mr. Krutch says, that "the tragic solution of the problem of existence, the reconciliation to life by means of the tragic spirit, is now only a fiction surviving the art." Or it may be as Hamlet, the Hamlet of Shakespeare says, that "nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." And that Archibald MacLeish thinks too much.

E. B.

LILY CHRISTINE

MICHAEL ARLEN

Doubleday Doran 1928

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So runs the perhaps embarrassingly confidential blurb on the paper cover of "Lily Christine". We are sorry if Michael Arlen has been ill, and we congratulate him on his recovery; and perhaps, during this deepening of his experience a new vision of a woman did come to him. We are obliged to the publishers for supplying this rather personal information, for certainly it is wholly personal. If Mr. Arlen was the recipient of such an amazing gift from those notoriously miserly donors, the Muses, as actually a *new* vision, (and of a woman, at that!) he has kept it discreetly to him-

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self, except for his confidences to his publishers, quite rightly judging such a gift too precious for the eye of the public. At all events, to our, perhaps undiscerning eye, "Lily Christine" contains no visions, not even a distant whiff (if one can whiff a vision!).

Lily Christine is the saccharine, Arlenesque centre of a group of astonishingly stupid, Arlenesque friends. And the point of the whole business revolves about Summerest, Lily Christine's husband, whose joints fairly creak as he lumbers on and off the stage. Lily Christine makes the mistake of loving him too much for the sole reason that he appears "somehow helpless" to her. Now that may be a good reason for loving a man to the point of tumbling under automobile wheels when he decides to divorce one—we scarcely feel in a position to judge. We do, of course, feel sorry for Lily Christine, however insipid she may be, for having such hard luck in a husband, although she does seem to really love him, calling him tenderly "her old cart horse"; and for having such a circle of utterly unintelligent well-meaning friends. We are told that she has children, yes, we remember that they were mentioned several times, two of them in fact, but their existence seems to impress her as little as it does us—perhaps that's because she is so near-sighted.

Oh, yes, its amusing if you don't mind a rather uninteresting style with plenty of clinchés thrown in for good measure. It's really rather interesting in spots for those who like Michael Arlen trying to be high-minded and serious. And we are glad that he is better and that he created his vision. But why, oh why, did he write "Lily Christine"?

E. S.

THE FATHER

KATHERINE HOLLAND BROWN

John Day 1928

The people who awarded the Woman's Home Companion—John Day Prize of twenty-five thousand dollars to Katherine Holland Brown for her novel, "The Father," say that it is a book "notable not only as a good novel, but as an authentic piece of Americana." And so it is, within limitations. Distinctly "The Father" is neither clever nor profound, nor yet epoch-making, but read it when you are

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fagged, and it does you good. You feel that it was written with a great deal of love, and for that reason it has warmth, and a kind of romantic glamour not usual in modern books.

For it is not a stylish sort of book. The heroine—there is no other label for her—Mercy Rose, is beautiful, sweet and wise; the hero, a young gallant of great strength and honour. They are all perfect, even to the utterly depraved villain. Their saving grace is a rather choice sense of humour, which surely Mercy Rose needs to get her through the uncommonly stupendous amount of housework she must have had with a family of seven besides herself after they moved out West, to say nothing of knitting stockings for them all—and she only sixteen at the time. Miss Brown has somehow accounted to herself for the way in which this labor got itself done. A detail like that does not really bother the true romantic.

But "The Father" is also an historical novel, and as such succeeds as well as most. The time is during that troubled agitation and uncertainty before the Civil War, and before the Abolitionist cause had any following to speak of. The Father, John Stafford, editing a struggling but ardent anti-slavery paper, first in Massachusetts and afterwards in Illinois, finds no support and little sympathy for his views, even in his friendship with Lincoln, who, I think, has suffered as usual from a somewhat sentimental feminine interpretation. Emerson, and Horace Mann and "Nat" Hawthorne, come into the story, and naturally, without that effect of being lugged in on pedestals, which has ruined so many historical novels. Of course in the novel which has a definitely historical setting, the author comes up against the problem of appeasing a public become all at once pedantic, who complain that this or the other never happened, and is therefore a sacreligious invention concerning people who have actual dates; or that some pet and cherished opinion of theirs has been rudely assailed. Miss Brown has used a great deal of ingenuity in avoiding these snags, partly, perhaps, because she takes her material chiefly from the anecdotes of her father, who knew the men and the times.

One is able to put together a vivid if not very coherent account of the Middle West in those days, although somewhat limited by the fact that John Stafford seems never to

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have talked to anyone but his family and Mr. Lincoln—his subscribers communicating their disapproval merely by holding out on another bushel of mildewed grain. Except, of course, when they ruined his press and tried to shoot him.

Miss Brown has undertaken to portray the struggle of a devoted father between the relative claims of four motherless children, and of his belief in himself as an apostle of truth, against a background of history. At the end she loses sight somewhat of her problem and becomes increasingly interested in Mercy Rose, the eldest child and only daughter. Even the Father himself comes second. The book is to be read for its sensitive historical feeling, for the humorous quality which lasts throughout, and for the color infused into a period which ordinarily does not attract the imagination. Especially there are Aunty and the parrot Zenobia, little Thomas, Jacob's coat, "not only a family relic, but a family tree"—and Mercy Rose's diary, a better one than we ever hope to keep.

E. R. Hay.

"A ROVER I WOULD BE"

E. V. LUCAS

E. P. Dutton & Co. 1928

The cover is rather entrancing, and so is the frontispiece of the little "Sleeping Sentinel" from the National Museum in Rome. Besides, who would *not* be a rover if nothing pressed him into service in the everyday routine of life? Mr. Lucas, too, has already written several works of that order which is known paradoxically as "a guidebook that isn't a guidebook." So, although I had read none of these former books, I was nevertheless prepared by his reputation to find in him a delightful essayist.

Perhaps my hopes were raised too high by the sound of its name, or it may be that to an ardent traveller the reactions of another to parrots in English inns and waiting in French post-offices never seem quite adequate. Surely there are many of us who would disagree with the author's assurance of the soothing effect of being "rocked in the cradle of the deep" and I doubt if we should like to see giant searchlights (donated, as the author suggests, by "Some rich

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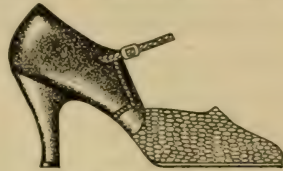
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American eager to do something fine and memorable for Paris") playing at night upon the façade of Sacré Coeur. However this may be, we cannot make adverse criticism of a book simply because we disagree with the ideas it happens to represent; we must first consider how these ideas are expressed.

Mr. Lucas is evidently a collector of information, odd bits of intelligence and experiences of travelling, for this is the material he has most readily at his fingers' tips. His chapters on the homes of Shelley and Cowper, on the Cheddar Gorges, on Sir Walter Raleigh who "enjoyed a pipe while the executioner was sharpening his axe" are best because they are based on fact, which the author can best deal with. The attempts at humor are usually forced and unsuccessful and one notices often an aptitude for misplaced flippancy. For such essays as the brief one on the passing of Mah Jongg and the one on Swans and Geese, Mr. Lucas has chosen subjects that Lamb might have treated with grace and delicacy, but which he cannot handle brilliantly because he has not the lightness of touch and the facility of transition from one subject to another that contribute to the essential charm of the informal essay.

Besides this general lack, there are two serious defects in the style of the book. One of these is an unfortunate choice of words. We object to such combinations as "a tinkle of bells *married* to the beating of hoofs," and various inappropriate epithets that make their appearance. The faculty of choosing the vividly accurate word to suit a description is not a part of Mr. Lucas's talent, and his phrases sound strained when he tries to attain it. Nor has he perfected the art of concluding an essay, of which Stevenson has given us so many happy examples. The Horsensian after-dinner speakers, he tells us, made their talks extraordinarily brief. "Directly they came to a real point and had shot their bolt, they sat down. Some, I will admit sat down with an abruptness which rather surprised me, and even seemed now and then to surprise them." This is exactly what the author himself does. He no sooner gives us an introduction to a situation and launches our interest in the direction of the ideas that we expect to find behind it, than he "sits down" upon it, and that is the end of the matter. We should like to hear more about Turner's water-colors and "the game of the

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sparrow," not to mention our desire for a deeper insight into the psychology of a perambulator and an answer to the question "Do the fish that look like men in clubs converse and behave like men in clubs?" Mr. Lucas evidently prefers to leave these things to our imagination.

What I did find in the book was a large amount of material which, although it might have been better presented and more gracefully developed, showed enthusiasm and interest, as a traveller, a ready power of observation and a style which when it allows itself to be natural has a very pleasant conversational tone. We are introduced to such odd characters as Thomas Tomkins who said in 1777 that "Poetry was originally intended to express our gratitude to the deity and teach mankind the most important precepts of religion and virtue" and we find sentiments that are common to us all in such passages as the description of the "Compleat Chauffeur," who "always asketh the way of the wrong people first." And for us who are not English there is great delight in finding the manifestation or rather the humorous criticism of the typically British attitude, summed up in the paragraph where Lucas tells of the two great Claudes and the two great Turners hung side by side in the National Gallery, put there, he says, "so that the world may have the opportunity of comparing the masters, French and English, and deciding that the English is the better!" We wonder whether it is with conscious or unconscious irony that he says "If we (the English) were to adopt a flower and endow it with fortunate characteristics, we could not do better than choose the violet." In token, I suppose, of English modesty.

The book is chiefly interesting, then, to one who can overlook its faults of style in order to enjoy the subject matter, and who *can* be sufficiently drawn into its atmosphere of leisurely observation to forget that its language is not that of Lamb or Stevenson whom it seems to imitate. And for those of us who confess our inability to pass over these details, there is still a pleasure in recognizing familiar names and places, in learning new facts about them, that makes the book worthwhile and enhances for us the out-of-the-way corners of England and France.

K. S. B.

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Smith College Monthly



DOMESTIC RELATIONS

NANCY HAMILTON



It is true, books and the play work strong, sub-conscious unrest in the minds of the innocent. Take my mother, for example. When she was younger, she admits she read innumerable books of the "Elsie Dinsmore" variety, and her father took her regularly to the theatre. This has had its calculated effect.. Mother has grown up with a multitude of literary and dramatic superstitions, chief among which is the servant superstition. From all her abandoned reading and play-going, this has insinuated itself, like a worm, into her consciousness, and that worm has lived and flourished. Servants are, for mother, something feudal and fundamental. If she could have had her way, our servants would have been born and bred in the ancestral home and lived and died, dusting down stairs in the service of their lady bountiful. I am sure mother has always felt secretly thwarted that when she was married there was no old nurse in the bridal household to rush to her side, crying, "I will not leave darling little Miss Margaret! From babyhood have I cared for her. Her husband cannot part us! Where she goes I go!" As I say, mother never had this comfort, and the lack only served to redouble her ardor. Her one matrimonial ambition was to have an "old family servant", and in fulfilling this ambition, she has gathered about her a collection of Lithuanians, Czechoslovakians, Welsh, English, Irish and Africans, that would stagger a character less determined than she. But let me not be misleading.

The flags of all these nations do not wave simultaneously from the kitchen rafters. They represent a series of servants, throughout the years, who, long since gone, still return with five children and an offering of Sauer Kraut to do homage to their benefactress. With unfailing regularity, on the day that we are having company for dinner, one of the "old family servants" comes back to spend the afternoon and ask for a twenty dollar loan; and mother, still cherishing fondly the idyllic picture of a funeral procession in which the beloved lady of the house was followed on foot by all her faithful and adoring retainers, listens to their family troubles and gives them the twenty dollars.

As I look back over the passing of the years, it seems to me that there was a decided favoritism shown to all foreigners, and preferably those who had been so newly imported that "Hello" and "Noo Yurk" were their only English terms of approach. Mother's interviews with the nation's most recent immigrants are memorable in the annals of the family. She is at her best at such times. There is something soothing about the way in which she slowly and gently forms the simple and more elemental words of the English language, her flexible lips patiently mouthing the syllables. Never does her voice become loud and harsh. If she cannot make herself understood by careful articulation, she resorts to a series of guttural sounds, which, she claims, is German for "How much does it cost?" and the immigrant always stays.

The first of these was Pauline. She came into the family before it could properly be called a family at all,—that is she served as cook to the bridal couple and ushered in the advent of my older brother. In fact, she bid fair to be an "old family servant", and had not matrimony claimed her, some two years after mother had taught her to speak English, she might well have been. As it was, she met a Hungarian on one of her "Thursdays out" and nothing would do but that she should marry. So, after tears and well-wishes and the gift of some table linen and sheets, mother went one day, and saw Pauline marry her Toni in a Hungarian Catholic Church. The first "retainer" had departed, but she was not lost to us forever, for she is the ring-leader in that great gathering of continental peasants who call on us annually with the children and Sauer Kraut.

The last time she came she brought Stephaine, Louie and two chickens with her, and stayed five hours. She was full of little family incidents. "Mrs. Mami'ton", she said, "I used to tink you vass so mean to Mr. Marshall, ven he vass a paby. You speak so crool to him. Now I haf my Louie, I shmack him tree times in de face, he iss so cracy," and a vicious, foreign light gleamed in her eyes, as she looked over at Louie, idly throwing rocks at the flower pots on the front lawn. She was very troubled, too, over George, her eldest. "He iss in hospital, Mrs. Mami'ton. His appendix iss bat and he haf opera. Oh, I don't mean to say anything wrong, but if any my childern iss to die vy couldn't it be Louie, instead of George? He iss so cracy!" and just then there came the noise of crashing pottery on the flagstones in front of the house. So mother listened to Pauline's naïve brutality, and even subjected us, the children of her heart, to the influence of such barbarism, and all for the sake of the servant superstition strong within her. She likewise contributed somewhat to George's "appendix opera", and last Christmas we were graced with a picture of the family, all recovered and standing in filial devotion around Toni, who looked belligerently into the camera, from an upright position in a stiff-back chair, a fat cigar in his right hand, which was resting delicately on his knee, his left hand planted firmly on Pauline's shoulder, which rose above him. Pauline had written on the back of the picture, "Der Mrs. Hamiton, I trid to get Toni to cut his mustashs for the photograph, but he voodent do it. Merry Christmas, Pauline." Mother looked upon Pauline's attempt to cut Toni's moustaches, as a personal tribute, and speaks of her with tears in her eyes.

When Pauline succumbed to the charms of her Toni, and forsook the Hamilton hearth to enter into the state of matrimony, mother was forced to cast about for a new family servant, and finally Lucy Muse was hopefully brought home. Lucy was a well-proportioned African of comfortable ways, and I have no doubt but that the idea of a negro mammy teaching the children to say "caint" for "can't" was an unquestionable lure. Father's camera was urged into action, and many little family groups were "snapped", with the children playing tag around Lucy's voluminous person, or hanging playfully from her apron

strings. When Marshall once told her she was so nice that she was getting whiter every day, mother at last put her down as the family servant, and rejoiced. Quite suddenly, however, Lucy joined the Holy Roller Church. Mother tried not to let this make any difference, but when Lucy insisted upon making a joyful noise unto the Lord even in the home, and when all of us children, who loved her so devotedly, followed her example with frying pans and egg beaters, the time had come to discard Lucy and she left.

"Nursie" was the next venture. "Nursie" was an ancient Welch woman—too ancient, I am afraid, ever to have grown old in the service. Mother realized this when first she saw her in the employment agency, but Nursie developed an immediate affection for mother, and such affection could not be rejected, so Nursie was ultimately brought home, in the hope that she might, just possibly, live longer than at the time it appeared probable, and in the end, die an "old family servant". Nursie was a delightful woman, who swathed herself in a yellow woolen shawl and regaled us with tales of her "separated" husband. "He used to cum in drunk o'nights and wish ta hang heself, till finally when I'd see him cumin' reelin' down the street I'd say 'Hurry up, chulderm. Git the trap. Yer father wants ta hang heself again!'" Such comfortable anecdotes only served to strengthen the bond between Nursie and the family until suddenly, one winter's evening, Nursie's husband appeared, an aged but spirited old toper, and bore her off, in what seemed to us a whirlwind of romance. Another hope frustrated!

So the long list grew—Beatrice, the Bohemian, Lydia, the Czechoslovakian, Pearl, the New Yorker and Delia who ran off with a married man. The search still continued for that one who was to be the family servitor. Then Bridget came into our lives. It was generally agreed when Bridget came that she would only stay until we could get some one else, for she brought with her no less than three hundred pounds net weight, and a set of whiskers that would scare a large-sized policeman into a trance. Bridget it was agreed, was too unsightly, ever to be allowed to stay. But soon it was discovered that farm horses could not drag Bridget from the comfortable house she had found for her declining years. We were an endowed institution, maintained for her sole benefit, and from which she drew her weekly allowance to

be handed over to the church. Thirteen years ago Bridget came and she is still with us. We can not shake her.

Every morning at half past six sharp, her ponderous bulk thunders down the back stairs, and light sleepers are awakened by ominous crashings and rumblings from the nether regions of the house. Every morning at ten she raises her piercing, tuneless voice in ecstatic song to the canary-bird, as she scours the dining room, her heavy step rattling the silver on the sideboard, and every afternoon without fail, just at five, she pokes her head into the living-room and shouts, "Tell yer mother she forgot the potatoes," and then retires, wildly pleased with herself, for having reported the lack just after the stores have closed. She is the demon in our home. Everything must be run according to Bridget. If one wants guests for dinner, one consults Bridget. "Bridget, my own, would it be too much to suggest that we have Mr. and Mrs. So and So for the evening meal?" If it is agreeable, she snorts briefly and goes on about her work, but if on the other hand, it is the least bit inconvenient she calls "God" loudly several times, and lightly lays her hand on the carving knife. Her methods are crude, but effective. Under such circumstances we generally do not have guests for dinner. It is often wondered why we keep Bridget, but we can do nothing but keep her. She refuses to leave, unless by force, and she is a large woman.

Two summers ago we decided to take Bridget to Canada with us. It was a bold step, but she would not be left at home, so at last we risked the consequences and said she might come. When the day appointed for the journey was at hand, Bridget put on a large, well-modelled corset, a blue serge suit of unknown vintage, with a sailor collar attached, and a cartwheel hat of black straw, with a white lily on one side. It was evident that this was a great occasion for her. A razor had essayed the arduous task of removing some of the whiskers, but it had failed, and left behind a patchwork effect, startling, and unique. Her suitcase—a large wicker box—was bulging with some mysterious and speculative contents and one stocking, just above her high black ground grippers, was swelled out like an apple, where her money-roll stretched it. As we waited at the station for the train Bridget began to show signs of weakness. She panted up to mother, drew her aside and said in a gruff, terrified voice,

"They tell me there's nothin' but tissue paper between the berths!" Mother tried to explain the technique of sleeping-cars, ending with a comforting word about the colored porter who would fix her berth for her. As the engine steamed into the station, Bridget shouted, "The further that nigger stays from me the better fer himself!" with which hostile threat she was pushed and shoved into the train. We scarcely dared leave her to work out her destiny with the porter, but having seen her into her berth we could do little more than pay the unfortunate ducky to keep his distance. It was a long, hot journey. When, in the morning, we came back for her, she was sitting just as we had left her, with her coat still tightly fastened over her ample bosom, and her hat a trifle askew. "Give me air!" she shouted so that all the car might hear and be frightened, and plunging blindly, like stampeding cattle, she flew for the platform.

This was, needless to state, a performance which none of the family, much less Bridget, cared to repeat, but toward the end of the summer the inevitable question arose, how to get the cook home? There was some talk of shipping her, and not a little of drowning her, but Bridget finally solved the problem herself, by declaring that she would go home in the day coach, where a body could breath if it wanted to. This seemed the best solution possible, so having drilled her for weeks on what to say to the customs men at the border, and how to acquire a respectful, submissive attitude toward them, when they wanted to inspect her luggage, we put her on the day coach, with an unspoken farewell and tremulous prayers. The next morning, with bated breath, we went through the coaches, and there sitting triumphant and menacing, her feet firmly planted on her wicker box, was Bridget. "Did you sleep well, Bridget?" we asked in a chorus. "I did not!" she cried, "it was air I was after and I got that!" "And did you open up your bag for the customs?" "Sartinly not! The man came around and says 'What did ye get up in Canada?' and I says 'nothin' but a lot of hard work.' and he says 'you're exempt.' But there was one poor girl caught fer smugglin' in eighteen dollars worth of diamonds! Niver again to Canada fer me! There's nothin' to do unless you sink a boat, and nothin' to see unless you climb a tree!" And the thought of the tree with Bridget in it, has so unnerved us, that we have never returned!

So Bridget rules the home. She is as much a part of us as Peggy, my young sister, with whom she arrived simultaneously, and she rules with a rod of iron. Guests at our table are often startled into fasting by a shrill cry from the kitchen, "God! why don't they hurry up in there! Ye'd think I had all night to wash the dishes!" and leaning across the beautiful damask, we children explain gently "Oh, yes, that's our faithful old family retainer. She's been with us thirteen years, and wouldn't leave if you bribed her! Isn't she a dear!"

DIAN

PATTY WOOD

The memory of brightnesses extinguished;
Exultings frozen perfect at their height,
And cooled to marble warmth as sculptured things;
The captured whisperings of evening, strung
Upon a thousand strings; and corners of
The sun remembered; laughter undefined;
The depths of emerald waters; tragedy
Reborn from burial in fragrant years.

Incarnate of such things, your beauty, and
It speaks to me of them, thru them; it binds
A cord of swiftly-twisted strength from them,
That reaches out, and winds, and coils, and ties
Me, with its deep and perilous power, to you.

"TELL ME WHERE ALL PAST YEARS ARE"

PRISCILLA S. FAIRCHILD

HER hand shivered upon a table, palm pressed against the grain, fingers wavering delicately, fantastically, like fronds of sea-plants overwhelmed in the current. A ray of sunlight plunged ninety million miles to strike her between the breasts and impale her on a background of long-legged, pink-billed birds. She sat relaxed, her pupils expanded to a fantastic size, hollow and dark as the entrance to a cave. A chain out of the past had wrapped its dragging links about her and swept her away.

She became suddenly an abandoned city, the rubble of an autumn field, a house deserted. The indrawn sag of her nostrils emphasized a garden faintly crumpled by neglect, where weeds blurred the edges of the flower beds. Windows, black empty horrors, looked out on a walled garden, where the sun flung itself on geranium-colored bricks. Fruit had ripened and rotted here, leaving a sweet smell of decay, and the buzzing of wasps. No longer trained in pyramid shapes the trees sprawled, heat-soaked and indolent, and the fountain, drugged with neglect, slithered over its pedestal in a slimy track.

An accumulation of years filled the house with sodden relics. Silver, worn paper-thin by many hands, tarnished in the warped side-boards, while long ago the crystal drops of the lamps had dashed themselves to a leap of brilliant splinters on the floor.

On the broad shallow steps ghosts passed each other in a curious intermingling. The hands of one melted without definition into the body of another, and from their union appeared the head of a third. Their feet left no track on the dust of floor but their shoulders whispered against the wall-paper, whose languid population mocked their transparency. Blue and white plates on the dresser reflected a paleness as they passed. Dulled pewter glowered at them over the hearth. Brass leered ironically under a green pa-

tina of age. Their coming troubled not at all the trembling gilt flakes on a Venetian Mirror, in the deep-sea surface of which appeared only their eyes, cold and desireless. Hands wavered over the maple chairs in white streaks of underwater light. Old books exhaled a mustiness for their breathing. White ashes nourished them and dust comforted their senses.

She was the house, and the objects in the house, and those who inhabited it. She was the crumpled skin of the outside wall, and the broken brick in the fire-place. Each ghost contained some part of her, and all of them were contained in her. As house she watched the ghosts moving within her. As ghost she saw the house, the shell of her being, and the other ghosts, sharers in her existence.

The picture that blackened on the wall, the lawn glittering with mist, the slow crumpling to shreds of leather and silk and wool, were the tearing to pieces of her present life. Changes occurred, new pictures came, after a little they rotted with mildew on the walls, but no old figure ever disappeared, nothing disintegrated so completely that its dust was not to be discerned overlying new additions and sifting through the house. New shadows wandered down the halls, ceaselessly, silently, pausing to look at a table, a chair, a banjo clock, fingering imperceptibly the leaves of a book. Never speaking, nor yet quite soundless, their whispering silence shivered through the cob-webbed rooms, echoed the tap-tap of branches stumbling over the window-panes, the stuttering of rain in the leaky gutters, the rasp of leaves shuffling over the floor.

She relived herself by living in turn the life of each ghost in the house. That one in which she existed took on for the time a reflected light, an imitation, a mockery of the past, which however cast a pale gleam over the house. She was possessed by the creature in which she lived, and which lived in her. Haunted, rapt, she moved like a sleep-walker through the rooms and about the country-side.

Sometimes she walked on a road by the edge of the sea. Tall rank grass grew up on each side, and about its roots she could see crabs and snails scuttling in the shallow roots. A white fog blurred the limits of the farther islands magnifying the rim of the trees. The world closed down to the circle in which she moved; existence narrowed to the print

of her heels in the sand, filling with water after she passed. Her feet rasped on the pebbles, carving a hollow out of the booming silence. A row of deserted bathing-shacks, dirty-gray and white, in creaking proof of desolation flapped their doors empty. Completely alone, in a naked blind world, the physical desolation emphasized her feeling of the spiritual loneliness of men. The fog about her grew alive with men and women, eyeless and dumb, who groped for each other and found a hollow sea-shell, who grasped at perfection and threw it away for a handful of sand. Across the incredible distances of their isolation they reached out their arms, but not even the tips of their fingers met. She saw lovers lying body to body and mouth to mouth who knew not that they stood isolated on pinnacles a million miles apart, so that even the gnat-like wailing of their calls disappeared in the void between them.

She flung out her arms with a violent resolution to be completely at one with some one, so as to confound and refute this hell of loneliness and isolation. Fire would mingle with fire, eating away the fog out of the plains. The mountains would bow their heads and the pinnacles come together. Union complete and absolute would be achieved.

For a long time that day she ran down the beach, with the salt wind dragging at her hair, the coldness struggling for her body. She exulted proudly in the flame that kept her joined with the lonely air, that would ultimately give her complete unification.

As other ghosts she slipped from place to place throughout the house, peered through the tattered curtains, until each room she visited sprang into vivid relief, renewing its life with the glowing intensity of freshly-fanned coals. In one small room the air smelled lavishly of flowers, and beyond the windows a noisy summer rain splattered the lawn. Across from her sitting in a low chair, a man plaited a piece of grass through his fingers, under and over, over and under. It was green, she noticed, and his hand shook a little. "That's all," he was saying, "that's all that happened." He laughed abruptly, and rose, leaving the room quite still, for the rain thumping on the panes mattered not at all. The spear of grass lay on the floor, claiming her minutest and most profound attention. "Two inches from the third brick on the left," she thought, knowing that he had gone, but refusing

to consider that his departure affected anything but the position of the grass blade. Footsteps clashed across the gravel. Her eyes left the floor although a cold ring of steel clamped its way inevitably around her heart. The silence, thick and heavy, clung like fog to the furniture.

The shower stopped soon, and rays refracted from raindrops struck their way into the room. Dully she leaned over and placed one hand on the floor. "And four inches on the right," she said aloud, and the sound of her voice boomed hoarsely, with the unnatural croaking of words spoken alone. Her nails screamed over the boards as she dragged her hand back, quick as a snake. The muscles of her body contracted and she cried out on a cracking note. After the echoes fell flatly away, waves of silence beat back into the room, lapping over the chair in which she sat, looking stupidly at her fingers, which were bleeding a little on the tips.

That person slid imperceptibly back to nothingness, the outlines blurring and wavering, the fire dying, until she resumed the appearance of a pane of grey glass, bearing a faint reflection.

From ghost to ghost she passed in a succession not logical but irrelevant, governed by no desire but erratic and involuntary, as they sifted by each other throughout the house with a vague unregretful murmur.

Once she lay in a room whose corners a light from outside, filtering through the trees, partly suggested. The indefiniteness of its size impressed her with a slight and very tired dismay, for the walls floated away as she raised her eyes, and the ceiling, now concave, now convex, soared cloud-like over her head. Half-waking from a restless sleep she felt extraordinarily light, and yet as heavy as iron in the bed. Time lost all significance. A minute awake became that long period of eternity when the world swings in its orbit with the heavy roll of a log in the trough of the waves, an hour disappeared in the brief clutch of an indrawn breath.

As a magician possesses a seed capable of springing in an instant to a stalk, a flower, a fruit, only to rot and disappear, so a moment of that night carried embodied in itself the essence of the time-span, the terrible antiquity of the dark itself.

She lay trance-like, unable to move or even to recognize the presence of her body, while past her hurried the hours, their black wings beating the air with the noise of roaring torrents, with the stillness of furred night-moths. In their swiftness, in their insatiable rapidity, she drew but one breath, experienced but one passing flicker of an emotion, lived one impossibly brief second, for the space between midnight and dawn passed as swiftly as the wrinkling of a smile in the outer corners of the eyes.

She heard the cock crow two distinct and chuckling notes at dawn. Between each note she lived again and again. Not dying she passed from existence to existence and the years flowed by like water, swift and silent, although they were held inescapably in the acorn-cup of an instant between two crowings of the cock. Her thoughts spun round like a wheel, now one, now another coming to the surface, tangling themselves with her emotions into an intricate pattern.

For a long time she lived in the memory of that night. Its ghost pursued her down the corridors, to lay a reminding hand like a feather of mist on her arm, to wind shadow-tentacles about her heart. But the dust continued to gather on the house, shutters clattered in the wind, the paint peeled and rotted. Stones crumbled off the terrace onto the lawn, and under them the grass grew yellowed, flattened, and wet.

JUST SPEAK EASY

RUTH R. KING

WE walked down East Fifty-Sixth street, trying not to look as though we didn't know which brown-stone front was the one we wanted.

"Twenty is the number, isn't it?"

"Yes, I'm positive about that."

As we passed each house we looked furtively at the numbers on the vestibule.

Sixteen, eighteen—

"It's the next one," I whispered.

We looked up and saw "Restaurant" written in gold letters on the door. I gave him a dig, and walked up the steps firmly. He opened the door for me, and we were in. From the door it was rather hard to see the restaurant because of the profusion of potted ferns and palms which made a wall of green, so that to enter the room one had to walk past these and around in again.

The room was typical of the rooms in all residential brown-stone fronts. It had two long windows on the street, and a very high ceiling with an elaborate chandelier growing like an inverted mushroom from it. But the room was so large that I came to the conclusion that a wall had been knocked out, throwing two rooms into one. It was very quiet. The small tables against the walls held two or three diners, or were empty. A maitre d'hotel came up.

"Two? Right here, Madame." He pulled out my chair. John relinquished his coat, and sat down facing me, a self-conscious smile on his face. "Would you care for a cigarette?" proffering me his silver case. He was so courteous and deliberate that I knew he was nervous. I laughed and he kicked me, under the table. A waiter came up, pad in hand. John blew out a match and looked up carelessly.

"Could we have—" the sentence faded out and John raised one eyebrow significantly. The waiter became all apologies.

"Menus! Certainly, sir. One moment, sir. I t'ought I seen you had menus." He hurried off.

I laughed aloud and John looked darkly at me.

"All right," he said. "I'll show you."

The waiter came back with the menus.

"What's good today" I asked, casually familiar.

"Try the znocchi, miss, ver' good. Artichoke all-so, verr' nize."

"Znocchi are those awful pasty little—" I began, but John trod heavily on my foot, and taking the conversation to himself as a man picks up a distasteful burden, leaned back in his chair and said firmly, "We will have znocchi, some salad, plain, and for dessert—well, we'll order that later."

The waiter, writing briskly on his pad, turned away, but John stopped him, and giving me a long look, drew the waiter near him, and breathed huskily in his ear. "Could we have some, uh—some, uh—wine?"

It was out. In a sudden heat of self-consciousness I started to look on the floor for something I might have dropped. John ashed his cigarette on the white tablecloth.

The waiter vanished, but reappeared almost instantly with the maitre d'hotel, who bent discreetly over my brother and murmured, "What is your name, monsieur?"

John had been preparing for this test but I saw the lie freeze on his lips.

"Gordon", he said miserably. "G-o-r-d-o-n."

Knowing that this would be completely inadequate he hesitated a moment, then blurted, "I've been here quite often with Mr. Ross. I thought—perhaps you'd remember me." The name Ross seemed to be all that was necessary. The maitre d'hotel smiled and bowed.

"Oh yes, of course, of couse. You would like wine, Monsieur? Red wine or white?"

"Red", said John happily, and kissed his hand at the backs of the departing waiters.

"What did I tell you" he began. "It's easy. Absolutely nothing to it. All I had to do was to tell him my name—"

"I hope this red wine of yours will be Chianti," I interrupted. "And I do wish we didn't have to eat those horrible little znocchi!"

"Oh, it doesn't make any difference what we *eat*—"

"Oh doesn't it? Well, why don't you get cocktails and highballs and things." I have always loathed znocchi.

"Oh Lord, we should have had cocktails, do you know it? Well, we'll get some Martinis with absinthe for dessert." The order of things never has bothered John.

The lunch, despite everything, was delicious. John and I grew happier under the influence of the red Chianti which the waiter poured from a straw covered bottle. We noticed that the handful of other diners was composed mostly of elderly gentlemen, and on only one table did we see anything but water. The quiet calm of the room, the waiters, the diners, and the complete gentility of the atmosphere struck us as curiously incongruous, and at the same time delightfully consistent, with that form of law-breaking which had made this restaurant known to us. "Of course," said John grandly, "I should like a highball, but as long as we are going to have those Martinis, you'd better not have anything more. You can't hold a thing, you know."

I laughed at him as though he had said something amusing. But after John had said to the waiter:

"We'll dispense with dessert, please. And bring us two Martinis with absinthe" I found everything amusing. The Martinis tasted rather badly and John assured me, with delighted wickedness, that they had "a kick like a mule." When my glass was half empty I felt deliciously airy and vague, and John's forehead became quite rosy. We grew extremely silly and laughed inordinately at everything. The waiter looked like a beagle; the room was like a plant house; we were fried; the znocchi had tasted like fish-bait; the room was hot as hell; we were fried. "No, we aren't really fried. As soon as we get out doors this'll all go." John solemnly lit a cigarette and solemnly blew out the match. Everything was funny.

I took another swallow of the Martini. It was coldly sweet in my mouth, with an under-taste so bitter that I gave an involuntary shudder as it burned down my throat and flamed inside me. My head grew suddenly so heavy that I had to support it on my hand, and my body ceased to belong to me. John, with a naughty chuckle, emptied his glass, giving his head a little shake after the last swallow.

"Got a kick like a mule," he grinned.

"Isn't it too awful? I'm fried!" I laughed at him, my eyes half-closed in delicious languor.

"Come on, old bean. A little fresh air, you know, and all that."

"All right. I'll sit here while you get your coat."

Feeling very uncertain of myself, I was afraid to stand up, but I found I could walk perfectly on feet that had no sensation whatsoever. John took my arm as we walked down the steps, and strolled up the street.

"This is the most divine feeling," I said.

"You look happy," said the sobered John. He steered me around the corner, into the bright sunlight that flooded Fifth Ave. I still found it hard to keep my eyes open, and I smiled happily into the haze of people, shop windows, and sunlight. I felt a sudden pull on my arm from John.

"Hey, snap to," he said. "There's Pete."

He propelled me toward Pete. We gathered on the corner of Fifty-fifth Street. Pete seemed to have friends with him. We were introduced.

"You remember my sister, Pete?"

"Absolutely. How are you? Do you know Miss Gordon, Mr.—; Mr.—." I didn't get their names but I didn't care. "This is Gordon, Joe, Bill, you remember John." There was a splendid confusion of cheery young men, inconsequential chatter, laughter, and dazzling sunlight. I heard someone say to John:

"No kidding? Listen I've heard of it. Around here, isn't it? What's the number?" "Twenty East Fifty-sixth" said John. "It's a cinch. Just go in and say you know me or Ross. Easy, you know. Never saw anything so easy."

I was dropped from the conversation, which centered earnestly about John. Soon with much handshaking and bared heads they left us, and we continued down Fifth Ave. which had grown more distinct and normal to my eyes.

"What did I tell you?" said John. "Wasn't it easy? If you know how, I mean."

SHELLEY AT FIELD PLACE—1804

SALLIE S. SIMONS

Look!

Do you see the rain-driven wind

Riding the trees down?

It has unloosed the horned moon

And blown it free of the sky.

That's why it is dark in here,--

The candle gives no light,--

It is dark, dark, I say!-----

And listen!

Do you hear the gray step on the ceiling?

H's an arch-fiend the alchemist,

Who lives on shreds of brocade in the attic.

His name is Cornelius Agrippa,

And he covets the silver shining raindrops.

There! He has shattered his lantern


Against the rafters,

And moans in the dust and dark.

TOUR

ELLEN ROBINSON

I

HE sun pushes up over the horizon like the suns on picture post-cards. It is the proper time for all correct small birds to twitter in their soft nests high in the swaying trees, but if there is any such romantic expression on their part, it is lost in the early morning preparations of the Boggs family. Mr. Boggs has brought the car around to the side entrance and Mrs. Boggs and the three children are filing out to it at intervals, depositing great armfuls of bundles and a number of suit-cases. The ability to pile these in and about the car so that the Boggsses themselves may eventually find room, if not comfort, is a true science, but one which they have studied for many years. Mr. Boggs is strapping three suit-cases and a golf-bag on the running-board; he stops grunting for a moment and stands upright.

"How many times must I tell you children *not* to get the car all scratched up!"

Mrs. Boggs appears at the side door with a box of aspirin and a bottle of aromatic ammonia. "Sam, will you put these in the right front pocket. Yes, I know you think it's silly, but I won't feel safe. And tell the children to come in to breakfast."

Breakfast is a gloomy meal; everyone feels a little ill. Julia the cook kicks the swinging-door as she goes out for the coffee. Mrs. Boggs whispers to her husband: "She goes around looking like a thunder-cloud. I'll be glad to get away from her for a little while. And I am going to put my foot down on a few things when we get back in September."

Mr. Boggs nods patiently; he is studying a road-map, making long computations in a little note-book. He breaks forth suddenly. "Yes, I think we'll make it about twenty after three."

Molly, the youngest, reaches for the butter and somehow pushes a grape-skin on to the sleeve of Jo's coat; he is sixteen.

He jumps up as though she had stabbed him and begins to brush the spot carefully, glaring at her silently. Dot, the oldest, speaks suddenly, "Oh! *what* did we do with the bathing suits?"

The other two join in. "We've *got* to have a swim to-night. Can't we, Mother?"

Mr. Boggs snorts. "I'm not going to have all that stuff left in that car all night. Every one of you has to turn in and help un-pack. As soon as we get to the lake."

"But after that. Please, Mother!"

"Ask your father."

"Dad!"

"Oh. . .just as your mother says!"

"All right. Here, take my keys and go up and get them out of the big trunk in my room." The three race up-stairs, Jo keeping a little behind. Mrs. Boggs calls after them, "Be sure you all drink another glass of milk before we leave. I don't want to leave a thing in the refrigerator." Julia stamps in and slams down a plate of toast.

Dot calls from the stairs, "Where's Percy?"

"Yes, where is he? Where is he? He hasn't been anywhere around all this time."

Jo goes to the door and calls, "Here, Percy. Here, Percy, Percy." His voice breaks in the middle of each word. Molly squirms into the door-way beside him.

"There he is, Jo. Jumped into the car all by himself."

"He's so afraid of being left. *Isn't* that cute!" Dot taps on the window with her finger-nail. An enormous airedale sitting in the car turns and looks at her appealingly, brushing his club-like tail along the seat.

At five-thirty they begin to get into the car, Mr. and Mrs. Boggs in front, and Molly and Jo in back with Percy—and a small space left for Dot.

"Where's Dot?"

Jo sniffs and crosses his legs. "We *always* have to wait for her. Was she ever ready? That's just the way they are! These women!"

Mr. Boggs folds up the road map. "It really seems to me, Margaret, that you *could* have had the children ready. I simply can't do everything, with all this driving before me." Mrs. Boggs attempts to shrivel him with a look, but he is again busy with the little note-book, occasionally blowing the horn

for Dot. She at last appears, carrying a large leather-covered ledger, a messy sheaf of papers, and five or six books.

"You don't want all those, Dot?"

"Yes, I do, Mother. How can I write my novel unless. . ."

"Then why didn't you put them in the trunk?"

"But I have to have them *to-morrow*. I feel that I'm going to start writing again right away. You can't suppress Art in trunks and things. Art is forever. . ."

"Blah," exploded Jo."

"But, Dot, there isn't any room!"

"Oh, don't worry about that. I don't mind sitting on them."

They back slowly out of the yard. Julia waves a gloomy farewell from the dining-room window. The sun has risen with a great, impersonal beauty; no one notices it. The car turns the corner and is gone.

But in ten minutes it stops in front of the house. Julia stalks out to it with a thermos bottle and a box of dog-biscuits. Mr. Boggs is impersonating any number of early Christian martyrs as they start off again. Julia stands at the curb, her arms folded in front of her. No one waves.

II

The Boggs have lost the road, though Mr. Boggs prefers that it be stated in other terms. "Why, I know this road from Spadeton to Harby Mills like a book! Used to survey all around here the summer of my Junior year. Know every little hill. If you will just be quiet and leave it all to me."

In silence they mount higher and higher; a little boy in overalls stares at them as though he had never seen a car before; the road begins to grow a little green beard between its two wrinkles, as Dot puts it softly. Percy is restless and walks back and forth over the children. Molly stands up suddenly and thrust her dirty little pug-nosed face between her parents. "Mother, I want another cookie. Tell Dot to get me one."

"No, you've had six since breakfast."

"Can I have an orange then?"

"No."

"Aw, Mother. . . ."

"Well, ask Dot to peel it for you."

"Want to suck it."

"No, not while we're riding."

"Aw."

"All right, but sit down. This road gets worse and worse."

Another ten minutes during which no one speaks. Jo has been compressing himself against the side of the car. "Mother I just wish you'd look at Molly. Just *look* at her. Why, she squirts way over here. Mother, just listen to her. Honestly!"

Dot hears nothing; she stares dreamily down into the valley. "Somebody tell me what rhymes with leafy."

"Beefy."

"Mother, make Jo stop. How can I create?"

"I want a hot-dog."

"Not till lunch time, Molly."

"I tell you I know this short-cut like a book. Known it for years."

"But just for fun, Sam, let's ask this man. It's the only farm we've seen for the last half-hour."

A tall man in hip-boots leans reflectively over the car door. "Got quite a load there, ain't ye? Why'n't ye bring the cat and the chickens?" He laughs and spits.

"Say, captain, this is right for Harby Mills, isn't it? Just want to make sure, you know."

"Harby Mills! Well, I'll be! Ye'll be in Spadeton in ten minutes."

"Oh, yes! Thank you. . . Good-bye."

Silence. Molly throws the orange-skin away and it rest jauntily on the running-board. She leans out recklessly. "Mother, why did Dad call him 'captain', especially when he was a farmer?"

"Sh! It's just a little habit of your father's. He probably learned how when he was surveying all around here. Like a book."

Mr. Boggs opens his mouth, considers a moment, and shuts it with a repressed snort.

Eventually they re-enter Spadeton and find the state highway. Mr. Boggs settles himself. "Well, let me see: I think we'll make it about ten after four; of course I can't tell for sure. But ten after—about. Not bad, though last year it was exactly five of."

"*When* can I have a hot-dog?"

"Mother, make Molly sit up; she leans all over Dot and then Dot has to lean on me. Mother!"

"Sam, I think the left front tire is down."

"Nonsense. It's your imagination. Do you think I'd ever start out with bum tires?"

"Oh!"

The car pitches unhealthily. At last Mr. Boggs stops it. "Jo, step out there and look at that front tire."

Jo climbs gingerly over the bathing-suits, knocking over a bottle of sun-burn lotion.

"Flat as a pancake, Dad."

"Tough. But we'll have to fix it."

"Aw Dad! It makes you get so dirty! Drive on a while; there must be a gas station."

"Can I buy a hot-dog then?"

"Joseph, this is an emergency. Let us meet it here."

"Aw, just wait till somebody comes along. I'll go find a man at some garage."

"Joseph! Take off your coat."

Mrs. Boggs waits on a dampish bit of grass in front of a sign-board. Dot has found a dilapidated wooden gate and leans one elbow on it. Mr. Boggs takes off his vest. "Margaret, will you please call Molly out from under the car?"

"Molly!"

"Aw, Mother, can't we eat lunch now? Everything else is gone. Can't we Mother?"

"Oh, bring me the basket." She begins to take out soggy stacks of sandwiches and deviled eggs to which the paper has stuck. Percy sits close to her, almost pushing her over.

"This ought to make us get there about twenty-five after, I think, Margaret."

"Oh, no, Sam. Don't you think about twenty-seven and a half?"

Soon the five of them gather around the basket. Jo sits off to one side on a little rock. A car passes them—and another—and another. Mr. Boggs speaks nervously from behind the cap of the thermos-bottle. "Better hurry up. We've got to get going."

"We can't Sam. Molly going to be sick."

He glares, and takes out the little note-book.

HAIRPIN EVENING

PATTY WOOD



NEED another hairpin most awfully---another hairpin right *there*." She stuck a long finger low into the krinkling gold mass. "And I can't take one from any other place, because I need every one just where it is. O I do need another hairpin!"

He loved her like this, when she was mock-serious and her voice was whimsical and her topaz eyes krinkled at the edges. Then all her golden beauty seemed to warm toward him, and glow for him alone, as if she were saying, "You and I, my dear---isn't it delightful?" These moments were priceless, but O so perishable. He had learned the secret of them, tho. To prolong them, he must take up the gentle banter. Then she would become even more melting, more liquid golden; then she would laugh that half-silent, krinkling laugh which was so peculiarly her own, clasping her hands around one knee and rocking gently backward and forward, or turning her head slightly to one side, deep in the pillows of her high-backed chair. "O how delightful! My dear, we do so enjoy each other---understand each other. Isn't it glorious?" Of course, she never said such things, but it was just as if she had, because she *looked* them, she *acted* them. Once, it was before he had learned what his reaction should be, he had made a fatal blunder. She was talking about green cats, was saying that life would be fearfully dreary until she possessed "a lovely jade-green kitten;" she had seen one once, and would never be quite happy till she had one and could "roll it into a soft, furry, green ball, right here in my neck." He had said, "But Laurel, there never was such a thing as a *green* cat." O it was a terrible mistake! Her golden beauty had suddenly grown metallic, and she had said. "O don't be so hopelessly literal!"

But he had learned his cue, so he now said, "When my ship comes in, it will be laden with a cargo of hairpins---all for you---long thin golden hairpins that zig-zag in the middle.

And you need never use the same one twice—for there will be an endless number, you know." She was laughing now, nodding her head among her pillows, as if she were saying, "Yes, yes—O do go on." He warmed to his subject. "You can throw them away as soon as you pull them out, while you take down your hair." Here his voice trembled a bit, for his own words startled him—he had always wanted to see her take down that lovely glittering mass. Once he had asked her to, but had been painfully reprimanded by her swift "Of course not—how absurd!" She was waiting now, so he continued. "And there will be a gold wastebasket for you to toss them into, and on your dressing table a golden box always with a fresh supply."

"Just like the Bible miracle," she suggested, smiling and golden and radiating.


He nodded, but inwardly felt a bit shaky, for he did not know which miracle. He was afraid of this uncertain feeling—it had so often been the means of destroying these precious moments of camaraderie. That always happened when she slipped away from him, sat slim and cold, all wrapped up in herself, her eyes far and like transparent amber glass, her voice far and not for him. When she said, right in the middle of perfectly sensible conversations, things like "And rosemary for remembrance" or "For God's sake let us sit upon the ground And tell sad stories of the death of kings," then he was terribly confused. He simply couldn't follow her; he couldn't understand her meaning, or if she had one. At such times he could only look at her in pained silence, at that lovely golden beauty, kinkling less and less, getting farther and farther away, aloof and self-sufficient, like one cold band of sunlight. Two agonizing memories flashed suddenly back to him. The day they sat on the sugar-loaf rock at the beach, thrilling after a long swim, indolently splashing the water with their feet. She had slipped away then, purring to herself—"Five miles meandering with mazy motion Thru wood and dale the sacred river ran, Then reached the caverns measureless to man, And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean." There had been much more, something about a waning moon and a woman wailing for her demon lover. She had stayed away long that time, but suddenly coming back, had said that they must go home immediately, and she was silent all the way into the city. Then that

other time—he had mentioned someone with a “strange” face. She seemed to have heard only the one word—“It hath the strangeness of the luring west And of sad sea-horizons,” she said dreamily. “O that lovely, lovely thing,” and she had quoted a long passage, saying upon finishing, “The most idyllic blank verse I know. Once—once—” O she was *so* far away! “Once I knew someone—for whom that was written. It *couldn't* have been written to anyone else. O she was lovely!” And he had sat there all evening, seeing that other person in her eyes. That, in turn, reminded him of the time she had said love was like a pancake, “so delightfully tempting when fresh (It makes you say M-m-m, and you feel M-m-m all over), but so dreary and unappetizing when cold.” He had protested vehemently. “Love,” he said, his voice quivering with intensity, “Love—” But he had got no farther—he did not know what he was going to say.—“is the greatest thing in the world,” she had supplied, mockingly, “‘Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.’” O sacrilege! He had been deeply hurt by those cutting words, and by her eyes, narrowed and glinting like a cat’s.

So now he steered clear of the Bible miracle—that was thin ice, and he an inexperienced skater. “Of course, all the hairpins won’t be the same,” the words fairly tumbled from his lips, bumping against one another in their haste, “there will be many, many different kinds.” Her smile was glowing her hair and eyes wrinkled. They said, “Of course—different—these thrilling hairpins. But what will they be like?” He hurried on. “Some polished and glittering, some softly dull like clouded crystal.” Now he was sure of himself, now he was happy, with a little rush of excitement. The evening stretched before him, golden with hairpins—hairpins.

FIVE O'CLOCK

ERNESTINE GILBRETH

HE sun reached down from the hills, making tiny patterns on the sidelawn. The smell of warm leaves and crisp fern drifted in from the gardens. A sudden breeze caught and ruffled the syringa bushes and Japanses maples. It pushed them swaying against the porch, caught in a rapid rhythm.

Five o'clock. This was Sarah Gibb's hour; it belonged completely to her. Always as the front hall clock struck the five dull beats, she had that sense of relief. Now she could leave the baskets stacked with mending, the endless sorting and straightening. Away from the hum of preparation in the kitchen, from the children dressing for dinner, she sought the sunporch. Hair askew, she ran lightly, thrusting open the door and closing it firmly behind her. For twenty years it had been so—a swift plunge into the cretonned hammock, the unconscious ducking of her head, so that it could not be seen through the windows. No one would disturb her. She could lie in complete peace—for an hour.

The creaking of the springs as she settled herself on the cushions, brought memories flocking back. Strange that her mind centered upon the past, refusing to look ahead. Details—she lived in them. The present and the future belonged to Will. He handled the big things, delighting to plan, to decide with a brisk jerk of his chin. "I'm very selfish about decisions, Sarah." Will had confessed it immediately after their marriage. "Best to leave them to me!" She had left them for twenty years, stifled by his ability, rejoicing with him as the plans crystallized. There was no doubt about Will's success in everything he touched. His business—she understood it vaguely,—the change in partnership, some new method of financing. He was proud of it, but prouder of his home, of the four children, especially of Jane now she had finished her third year at college.

Will! She tingled, remembering how handsome he had

been at breakfast that morning. The coffee had been cold; he was tired, distressed by the finical junior-partner, by Jane's late hours. Gruff, difficult at times, but so fine, so ambitious,—his white hair, the high glistening forehead and firm lips! Her love for him suffused her, still made her feel choked and breathless.

She knew that she was tired. Passing the hall mirror just now, she had seen deep circles under her eyes, the lines that had become tighter across her forehead. But there were so many things to be attended to—Junior's new coat at the tailor's; it should have come back this morning—Jane's green silk needed lengthening, half an inch at least—fresh flowers on the table—all the innumerable tasks that were hers. No ending; no beginning. From day to day she continued, repeating endlessly.

The children needed her less these days. Young people wanted to shift for themselves, to think independently. No longer must she lie awake at night listening for the twins, or for Junior's cough. But she liked to stay up for Jane—one or two o'clock—and last night—. She remembered now. Jane had been drinking. "Don't kiss me good-night, Mother,"—an embarrassed little smile—"just you run on to bed—"

But she had persisted in following her into the room, tucking her into bed. Jane—her little girl—if Will—

Perhaps Junior was right. She worried too much. "You don't get out enough, Mother," he had tickled her under the chin, "There's no need hanging around home all your life—"

There were her girl-scout activities, and the Ladies Guild. Junior had smiled at that. What a big boy he was getting to be, almost as tall as his Father.

Even the twins objected to her "fluttering around". That had hurt. It was a part of Sarah's code to feel that she was needed.

Yes she had forgotten. The children were growing up now—the twins would go to high school next year. She must remember not to kiss them before people; she should know better. Bob had spilled some grape juice on his new gray sweater—she must remind him—Then Jim mustn't wear his, the blue ones would do until—Of course they should dress alike—only a few years more—

Then that chair in the dining-room. She must remember to have it fixed. Will had remarked on it again this

morning. But there were so many things—she never finished—

The hammock was swaying back and forth gently. Sarah's head ached. The throbbing had been much worse these last few days. If she could only stop worrying. The perfume from the syringa was suddenly comforting. That sweet, sweet smell. A few blossoms in a blue bowl would look well in the library. Think of those bushes flowering still, new flowers on the same bushes. Will liked syringa too—next to lilies-of-the-valley, wasn't it? Yes, next to lilies—she would pick some tomorrow.

The hush creeping in from the lawn, soothed her. She found herself less tense. Beautiful world. How lucky she was—Will—the children! "Such a nice family—you should be proud. Mrs. Gibbs". Someone had said that just the other day.

Yes, she was lucky. But sometimes she wondered if Will realized how she was trying to help, to keep his home for him. There were times—but he never meant a word of it. He was worried lately—there was always the business, that trying partner. Oh yes, she must ask him about the twins tonight. Shouldn't they be outside more—playing tennis perhaps? At their age, staying in the house, reading—

A draught whipped suddenly across her back. Mercy! Someone must have opened the door. Her eyes snapped open. "I'm out here. Who wants me?"—the exhilaration of being needed. "Yes, Junior—"

He was apologetic, a little confused. He had disturbed her. So handsome, wasn't he—Will all over again—

Raising her head on her hand, she surveyed him. Those jagged lights again. She must take it easier next time. "Sit down, son"—but she had sensed the sudden blaze of pain in his eyes. Bad news—something had happened.

Courage! Vision! She strove for them blindly. The world,—twisted, wasn't it? He was gripping her hand until it prickled with pain. Then at last his voice, flat, calm. "Steady, Mother—you see—Dad—"

A sudden sharp pain dug through her heart. "Lord, dear Lord—" was she praying? But in the back of her mind was the dining-room chair. She must remember—



BOOK REVIEWS



THE BRIDAL WREATH

SIGRID UNSET

New York: Alfred Knopf, 1928

Alfred Nobel (accent on the last syllable) was a Swedish inventor-manufacturer who left his fortune to advance the world's literature, science, and the cause of peace. His specification for literature was that it should be the "most excellent work of an idealistic character," and this year the Academy in Stockholm awarded the prize to Sigrid Unset.

Of her trilogy of the early 14th century Norway, "*Kristin Lavransdatter*", the first book is "*The Bridal Wreath*". The story tells Kristin's life from early childhood, through her romance to her marriage.

She grew from the young animal that sniffs the air, learning its scents, to the young girl who feels vague stirrings of responses. That everyday people live on co-existent planes which never touch, she first sensed out on the open with her father. But her longing for that contact so rarely effected—that "warm and live love"—did not come until her betrothed kissed her. Suddenly she thought back to her childhood friend Arne, but recently dead, and knew that between her and Simon there would always be the "uncertain shadow that dulls life." Thus she willingly went to the Sisters in Oslo at the suggestion of Simon. "I know a little of some of the maidens who are there," he said laughing. "They would not throw themselves down and die of grief if two mad youngers tore each other to pieces for their sakes. Not that I would have such an one for my wife—but, methinks Kristin will be none the worse for meeting new folk."

The second part, "*The Garland*", is her passionate, wilful romance with Erland. It is not strange to us that Kristin

DON'T BE THROWN ABOUT!

DON'T TAKE A CHANCE

WITH CARELESS DRIVING!

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“AND NOTE THE DIFFERENCE”

saw her own and recognized him. Life behind convent walls could not keep her and she managed meetings again and again. "Once, while she was looking at the dark head that lay in her lap, between her hands, something bygone flashed on her mind. It stood out clear, yet distant, as a homestead far away on a mountain slope may start to sight of a sudden from out dark clouds, when a sunbeam strikes it on a stormy day. And it was as though there welled up in her heart all the tenderness Arne Gyrdson had once begged for while she did not as yet understand his words." The tenderness was part of that "living love" which eventually drove Kristin to having her engagement broken, and to returning home to the silent reproach of her family.

The third part is the culmination in marriage of her romance after long days of weary thoughts when "Kristin thought each morning that she could bear no more, that she could never hold out to the day's end.—But still, when the evening came, she had held out one day more." During the wedding preparations, she discovered that she had not been punished with sterility by a just God, but that she was to bear Erland a child. She alone knew it, but what her father suspected when he saw her unmaidenly glances from the bridal bed towards Erland was not far from the truth.

The story seemed all Kristin to me. Perhaps it was because I was Kristin during the 377 pages. All my friends and relatives were those people, mentioned above, those people on co-existent planes. Only Erland's plane seemed occasionally to touch mine. Lavrans, my father, and Ragnfrid, my mother, were in my life. But, as Kristin, I knew them only as mother and father. As the reader I saw them and heard their own stories from their own lips as they settled down for the night after Kristin's wedding. I heard Lavran's sigh as he said of Kristin, "She has come to the bride-bed with the man she loves. And it was not so with either you or me, my poor Ragnfrid."

As I said above, this is an historical novel of medieval Norway, but far removed from the novels written by romancers like Scott. Clothes are not costumes, scenery is not the painted background of the historical cinema; nor, on the other hand, do the two together overwhelm the reader by the detail of knowledge. It is a beautiful Gobelin of mellow, rich color. Technically it shows the great skill of the weaver

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in the composition and the decoration borders, but artistically it is even greater in the figures which seem not woven but standing and moving against the hanging tapestry.

The story of Kristin might well be written with the color of any age or country for its setting, it is so universal a tale. Pick up the book to read, and, before long, time will pass unnoticed, the shorthand of the clock will move from figure to figure until you shut the covers of this book and reach to pick up the next of the trilogy "*The Mistress of Husaby*."

Anne Andrew 1929

THE HAPPY MOUNTIAN

MARISTAN CHAPMAN

The Viking Press 1928

Out of that new South which gave to contemporary American letters Du Bose Heyward, Julian Green, Ellen Glasgow, James Boyd, Julia Peterkin, Paul Green, Burton Rascoe, Frances Newman, T. S. Stribling, Elizabeth Madox Robert and Conrad Aiken, comes Maristan Chapman as the latest to retain what is characterized in the November Harper's as a "poetic quality of style in dealing with the pedestrian prose of experience. If Ross Santee and Will James have helped the West to escape from Zane Grey and his confreres, so has Mrs. Chapman in *The Happy Mountain* rescued the Cumberland from the clutches of John Fox, Jr.

Taking the dangerously simple triangle as her plot, (but not as her motif), Mrs. Chapman develops the story of Wait-Still-on-the-Lord-Lowe's fight with Burl Bracy for the love of Allardene Howard. The tale is written with a keen eye for detail and an awareness of the beautiful. It is written in an idiom new to us, the real speech of the Cumberlands, which is different not because the hill-billies say "hyar" or "gwine", but because spring nights are "lown" (gentle), and the fields are "fere" or "fellowly," and the hills are lost in "smirr" (mist). These coined words of intrinsic loveliness are woven by the author into lyric passages which are the more surprising and delightful because of their complete unselfconsciousness.

"The way the moon shrinks the hills is a sight to see! One hour they'll be standing dark, and reaching up to heaven, proud as they needed no salvation. Then up comes

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curling the bare, white moon and they flatten out and spread and run down the valley, creeping and ashamed.

"The night thickened in the hollows, while the high places were smeared with fresh moonlight. The drifting shadows made the forest a living, moving thing, that at one time both threatened and sheltered his homeplace."

Or:—

"‘Going on is like dreaming,’ Waits told himself, ‘and living is just like going on. Then living and dreaming must be the same thing, and we all of us live in a dream.’ He stopped to look at what he had said, and being unable to make it out, went on again more quickly to get out of its way."

These are words that sing, and if the song is occasionally interrupted while the words go on in a talking voice, even that is of a pleasing quality. Mrs. Chapman's music is fine enough to hold our interest through a few intermissions.

While we are still considering the mechanics of the book, two things must be noted: that the characters stand out as individuals instead of as types; and that the relations between them are indicated with a quick subtlety not often found. As illustration of the first point we might use never-to-be-forgotten Uncle Buddy Shannon, who "looked the picture of a down-gone Santa Claus that had'n't been washed since Christmas," and who made up for an irateness expressed by "scattering swear words that flew around like spent bullets", in his eagerness to share the last crumb of leftments in his hovel with his guest. For the second—listen to Waits and Barsha, his mother:

"‘I'm going far 'n' beyond,’ Waits went on, ‘far 'n' beyond, and even farther than that, maybe so far as down to Fentress and Cumberland.'

"Barsha crossed the kitchen and took the water-pail off its shelf. ‘Here! Take this to the spring for fresh water,’ she said, ‘Least-ways lessen you're gone right NOW!’

"Waits grabbed the pail from her and, unmindful of his steps, ran into the doorside and spilled the water dregs on the clean floor.

"‘Heard the news?’ Barsha asked.

"‘What?’

"‘Fayre Jones fell offen a foot-log watching a fence-rail float down the creek yar morning. He's another that never could do two things at one time neither.'

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" 'Heard you tell that before,' Waits gave back; and turning at the foot of the steps he called to her: 'What's the best way to keep May frost offen the crops?'

" 'Plant 'em in June,' Barsha said. 'And if our old man should to find us acting simple this way, the house wouldn't be worth living in for a perfect hour.' "

But to me, it is not in her natural felicity of phase, or in her delineation of character, or in her nice indications of the relationships between people that Marisyan Chapman is greatest. For in Waits Lowe, torn between love and the wanderlust, going forth from his homeland to satisfy his "nedd to wonder", to resolve a little the Chaos left over in him by the Lord, faring forth to find words and booklearning, coming back with Vegger his fiddle in place of these, contented, yet still yearning,—in this Wait-Still-on-the-Lord-Lowe, she has given us a universal creation. There is a happiness in Mrs. Chapman's philosophy, but it is quietly aware of pain. Most of all there's truth, for Waits, if he finds peace in his love, is nevertheless "not one mite nearer being easy in mind;" and at the end of a search that has brought him back to his starting point, we find him owning:

" 'I'll have yearnings all my days 'n' years, and desires not to be quenched, but I've come full circle, and hereafter my shoes are no more swift for roaming; my head, maybe—but there's Venger."

Here is the eternal seekingness of man understood, without bitterness at the knowledge that all we ever find is another question or another want. In this understanding, in her insight, in her joy, however poignant, and in her loyalty to what is true lies Mrs. Chapman's worth. For if her mountains are filled with the sounds of gladness, she leaves her forest brooding.

K. Lawrence Stapleton 1932

THE CASE OF SERGEANT GRISCHA

BY ARNOLD ZWEIG.

Translated from the German by Eric Sutton.
New York: The Viking Press, 1928. \$2.50.

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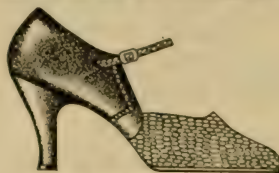
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that has been written about the World War. He is not to be confused with Stefan Zweig, familiar to many of us as the adaptor of Ben Jonson's *Volpone*, recently played in New York by the Theater Guild. Arnold Zweig is a young man, who conceived the plot of *The Case of Sergeant Grischka* during the war, wrote it as a play in 1921, and finally produced it as a novel in 1927. This book is the second of three volumes whose collective title will be *A Trilogy of the Transition*. Both the first, *Education before Verdun*, and the third, *The Crowning of a King*, have yet to be published.

The story is concerned with the Russian peasant, Grischka, a prisoner in a German prison camp on the eastern front. He carefully plans and executes a dramatic escape, spending the winter wandering through the forests towards his Russian home, in which are his wife and the baby he has never seen. Before long he comes upon Babka and Kolja, two Russian refugees. Babka and Grischka live together, and she tries to make him forget that he is an escaped prisoner longing for his home. Finally she realizes his unhappiness and urges him to go, even getting him another identification tag to make things easier in case of capture. He is arrested. The identification disc proves to be that of a Russian spy, which means the death sentence.

He is imprisoned again, this time at Mervinsk, under the supervision of General von Lychow. There he succeeds in establishing his innocence, and by his good humor, his services, and appealing peasant innocence, he ingratiates himself with his immediate superiors, eventually coming to the notice of the General, himself. Major-General Schieffenzahn is commander-in-chief of the German army in the eastern sector. Von Lychow appeals the case to him, almost sure of its being dropped, but to his amazement Schieffenzahn orders the sentence carried through for the sake of discipline. Von Lychow delays; he makes a trip to head quarters to see the Major-General. Then there follows the duel between old Germany's justice and new Germany's discipline which carries you through a desperate struggle to the end of the book. It is a battle between von Lychow of the old nobility and Schieffenzahn risen from the merchant class; it is a battle of doffed resistance on the right side and shrewdness on the wrong.

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The people in Anold Zweig's book are so convincing, so real, that it is nearly impossible to select one characterization more perfect than the rest. There is Grischa, whom you pity as an unfortunate pawn in a game between greater powers. There is von Lychow, whom you admire intensely for his sympathy and old-world courtesy, whom you love for his kindness and gentleness to everyone with whom he comes in contact. There is Schieffenzahn, supposed to be a study of Ludendorff, who conforms perfectly to your conception of the typical German officer—relentless, brilliant, hard, autocratic. There is Babka—"the rough peasant woman who had fought two fights and killed three men with her own hand", and holding for Grischa "that entire affection in which mistress and mother are united". She followed Grischa to the end, bearing his child, comforting him, fighting for him.

It is only after finishing the book that you can fully comprehend its power, its intensity, its greatness. During the reading you are far too conscious of the rapid motion of the book, of Grischa's struggle for existence, of a new and unknown aspect of the war. Arnold Zweig did not attempt to soften the world's opinion of war time Germany. But we can definitely admire the people who fought for Grischa. Perhaps with the completion of Zweig's trilogy we may grant humanity and justice to this side of Germany we are just beginning to know.

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THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITY

MARY CHASE 1931

MARY first met Joseph Sabin just after he graduated from college, where he had been recently regarded by the undergraduates as a literary genius. He was attracted by her strange, Slavic beauty, and she, for her part, was much impressed by his interesting if somewhat ape-like appearance, and by the tradition of intelligence that had grown up about him. She knew also that he cherished great hopes of being a newspaper man, and writing for the Atlantic in his spare moments.

By the time she married him, he had made a few steps toward fulfilling his ambitions—he was a reporter on the Chicago Daily News and had had an article on the evils of city life accepted by the Atlantic. Mary had little sympathy with his views on city life, or on life in general, but she respected his ambitions and his rather meager achievements. So she married him, hoping vaguely that she could handle him and make him a credit to her.

For seven or eight years he worked steadily and was progressing, although too slowly to suit him. He complained that he could never write, cramped in a city as he was—that he had genius, as he could show if he were free, and living the sort of life he fondly supposed an educated farmer could live. Mary was contented in the city, in spite of the fact that they were uncomfortably poor, and always had difficulty in taking care of the six children who appeared in quick succession. They, however, furnished Joseph with an excellent argument—country life is good for children—but still Mary refused to leave the city. However, the next April, when

Joseph was sent down to Florida to cover a murder trial in Tampa, he bought an orange grove, disregarding Mary's wishes and came back to fetch her and the children. He was full of glowing but rather apologetic descriptions of the place—"There's a house—of course it isn't very nice yet, but I'll fix it up for you. A creek that only needs cleaning out runs right by the house. The schools are good—they're rather far away, but the school bus goes right by our gate. The roads aren't very good yet, but they're putting in new ones next year. Anyway it's primitive and healthy and that's what I want. It's warm—the children can run about bare-foot all day. I'll have a man to manage the grove; and—you know how much oranges cost—we'll make money and I'll be free and can write."

The train stopped beside a small sign which said "Sutherland Station", and with the help of two porters, Joseph got the bags and the children out. Near the sign a very old Chevrolet was waiting, with a thin, drooping old man standing beside it. He took the bags and some of the children and packed them in the back seat, while the rest of them sat in front. The sun had made the car almost unbearably hot. The metal door burned Mary's arm when she leaned against it; and the younger children, crowded together in the back, began to cry. The old man started the car, and, following two ruts in an otherwise blank, flat and uninteresting field, they rode for an hour or two through a series of fields, each a repetition of the first, with almost the same arrangement of scrubby palmettos and tall, naked pine trees. After a long time the ruts turned and began to run along beside a narrow creek, choked up with weeds and poisonous-looking roots. Mary decided that that must be the creek that "only needed cleaning out", and looking ahead saw a house, distorted to her sight by the oily waves of heat rising from the ground. "That's ours," said Joseph, and after jolting over an insecure bridge they stopped at the gate. It was a blind-looking house, dirty-white, with torn screens in the windows and a porch shuttered with tarred paper. The grass had obviously been left to itself for a long time, and had grown coarse and stalklike, tangled in a thick mat over the ground. There was one big tree shading the west side of the house, two smaller ones with big white flowers on them, and a few bushes. Behind the grove, Mary could see

the beginnings of the grove, and on each side, the waste land, like the fields through which they had come. "See that land?" said Joseph, "Nobody's ever put a plow in it before. I'm going to set out a new grove there." While he was talking he kept brushing his hand across his face, and soon Mary noticed little, darting black specks before her eyes. She discovered that they were gnats who seemed to be attracted by her eyes and who danced back and forth in front of them, occasionally darting in at her eyeballs. To escape them she went into the house while Joseph took the children off to see the grove.

For several months she could think of nothing but the heat and the gnats. Whenever she went out, the hot light rested like a weight on the top of her head, so that she felt crushed under it. And indoors or out, the gnats spun like black specks before her eyes and stuck to her skin. She was afraid of this tropical country where everything happened so quickly—it seemed to her as if she could see the grass grow, die, and decay. The color of the leaves was also strange to her. At first she often tried to find a word to describe it, but since she always failed, she soon stopped trying. It was a dark, dull green, almost black, and the surface of the leaves was rough and dusty, although there was no dust anywhere—only the sand in which nothing good would grow. Joseph and the children seemed to have no such feelings of insecurity and distrust. The children played hide-and-seek in the thick palmetto clumps. Joseph was happy, walking through the tall weeds, directing the negroes in the clearing. Mary was afraid. At night when the tall pines stood stark and black against the sky, and the land looked flat and lifeless, it seemed like a setting for a great funeral; but in the daytime the land was aggressively alive and growing, always fighting her and her family. So she stayed in the house, while Joseph and the children lived outdoors.

When winter came she felt less unhappy. The country no longer seemed so oppressively tropical, and the grass and weeds stopped growing at the fearful rate that had weighed on her mind so, at first. Joseph had started a book, and, with the cold weather, he and the younger children were in the house most of the day, while the older ones were away at school. But in the spring, Joseph found from the sale of his fruit crop that orange groves were not as profitable as he had

dreamed. He dismissed the negroes, and with the help of an old cracker, did the work himself. Then Mary noticed that the oldest boy was thin, and looked pale and unhealthy. So she and the boy made the long day's journey to Tampa, crawling through the miles of deep, sandy ruts. The boy had hookworm, and they stayed for a week in Tampa, while he was being cured. After that, the children never went barefoot, and when, a month or two later, one of them met a rattlesnake in the grove, Mary could see that they were beginning to share her terror.

Joseph felt no fear, but he was beginning to be driven by the land. By the time they had been in Florida two years, he had stopped writing entirely and spent all his time working in the grove, coming home at night too tired to keep awake. The work bent his back and made his shoulders and arms heavy and strong. He would come shambling home at night, bent over with his long arms hanging in front of him, his hands almost touching his knees. Mary sometimes wondered if he swung from tree to tree in the grove, like the apes he resembled more and more.

She feared these thoughts and buried herself in her work, to keep from thinking. She felt safe in the feeling of detachment her work gave her, and gradually became indifferent to the life around her, and even to the circumstances of her own life. On the rare occasions when she caught sight of herself in a mirror, she could see that the fire and color which had made her beautiful, had gone out of her face. With her hair, faded to a drab brownish grey, and her shrunken face, she was becoming like the old cracker women who sat in the hot sun outside their ramshackle cabins and dipped snuff. But she was past caring even for that. A hurricane came and tore up half of their trees. Joseph worked steadily for a year, and had just repaired the damage when there was a freeze and the fruit crop was lost. Then, slowly, their fortunes improved. Land became more valuable, the fruit crop was good for three years in succession; Joseph bought a new car. It was all the same to Mary. In summer it was a little hotter, and in winter a little colder; she baked and scrubbed, and the time passed, as it always had.

One morning in the fall, while she was working in the kitchen, she heard a shout from the yard. She went to the door and saw Joseph leaning against the gate. "Snakebite,"

he said. She ran out to him, and, ripping off his stocking and rolling up his trouser-leg, she saw the two red marks in his swollen leg. "I'm done for," he said, "Get me a piece of paper, for a will. I want you to stay here—the grove and the land—" She didn't wait to hear any more, but ran into the house to get the medicine and the paper. While she was fixing the potash, she looked out of the window and saw Joseph, squatting on the ground with his leg doubled under him and his heavy hands exploring the bite. She could think of nothing but the thought that had obsessed her for so long—how like an ape he looked. Why should she be ruled by an ape? She ran back with the solution and the bandage, and saying, "There's no time to make a will," she put the tourniquet on his leg, not twisting it very tightly. While she rubbed the potash into the bite, he told her about the snake. "I was pruning a tree and stepped backwards. Something hit me in the leg, very lightly, and I thought I'd stepped on a stick. When I got around to the other side of the tree and saw the snake, I knew what had happened, but then it was too late, so I ran." Then he closed his eyes and slumped forward. By the time Mary had the car ready, she had to shake him to arouse him, and then, finally, almost to drag him to the car. When the long ride to the nearest town was over, he was dead asleep, and the doctor could not wake him. He died, in the doctor's office, that afternoon.

When the doctor came out, Mary was looking steadily at the wall opposite. After he told her, she said nothing. She was thinking that, with luck, she and the children could leave for the north within two weeks.

ARCHEOLOGIST

PATTY WOOD 1930

Remember, remember—
Why must you always be
Remembering?
I think, for you, today
Is but a time for seeing yesterdays,
And there is nothing in tomorrow.
Remember, remember—
You dig, and burrow, ferret out,
And when, from some obscure and rotting tomb,
You have unearthed a moment of the past,
“Treasure!” you cry and, gloating,
Dangle it before my eyes.
Remember, remember—
I hate it, hate
Its brokenness, its failure;
What of loveliness there was
Is tarnish,
All of magic has been lost,
And there are tatters—
Remember, remember—
Why must you always be
Remembering?

THE DAY

PRISCILLA FAIRCHILD 1930

WELL this has been a day," she sighed, sinking suddenly down to the purple flowers and green leaves of the sofa. "This has been quite a day," she repeated, and felt experimentally around her head for the wandering prongs of hair-pins poised like dragon flies for flight.

Even getting up at seven to drive Fred to the train didn't make the morning long enough. Mrs. Doyle had come to clean the pantry after breakfast. All the china taken down, washed, dried, put back again, clean bubbles of glass glowing on the lace-petticoated shelves, hot smell of ammonia and soapy water, garrulous Irish voices resounding through the house all day.

About ten she got the lists and gave the orders to Norah. A long process this, in which she stood tranced, ecstatic, tapping the oil-cloth of the table with a pencil, thinking of nothing, of everything, the fly buzzing in the window, summer and bathing and wet hair, the garden to be weeded, strawberries, hungry children. "Oatmeal," she said triumphantly, "oatmeal, I knew it all the time." Norah, faithful acolyte, murmured "Oatmeal, of course." So they went through all the list, searched the ice-box, peered into the closet for red and yellow packages. "Cinnamon," she hummed, "clove, allspice and mustard, red pepper, white pepper, salt, sugar and tea. Now for dinner shall we have" Her mind spun off again. Stop at the bank, write to Talbot; Anne needs a new evening dress. Would she look well in black? A miniature Anne in a black dress pirouetted through her brain, fascinating, adored by everyone, the most attractive girl at the party. . . .

"I shall get the material tomorrow, and make it next week when I have more time. Such a lovely idea in my mind."

". . . . And caramel custard for dessert, then, that's always nice."

Caramel custard and string beans are favorites of

Fred's. She was going upstairs whistling an assortment of tunes curiously jumbled together, and as she moved through the rooms, the crystal drops on the old-fashioned lamps tinkled an obligato to her firm tread and the click of her heels.

Then the laundryman made his weekly dramatic rush up the drive.

"Yes, the wife was better, thank you. It was a rotten job driving a truck around, waiting at back doors in the rain and mud. Fine open winter it had been though."

Soapy must be tied out. He watched her from the window seat where he lay in a pool of sunlight, his tail thumping joy and expectation. "You worm," she said through her closed teeth, and swooping suddenly over him, crumpled his ear in her fingers, "you little brown worm."

Tied to the tree, he saw her walk away over the sodden lawn. She picked up a handful of dried sticks from under the hedge, to scatter them forgetfully in a minute as she pulled three weeds out of the flowerbed. The earth had a rotten feel, a rotten smell, the musk decaying before the kernel sprouts. "So many leaves to be burned, and borders weeded, and the garden must be ploughed soon. Perhaps next summer we can have a man . . . I must pop down and give the furnace a little shake."

But she still stood, her grey-green eyes flecked with gold staring aimlessly across the road at a telegraph pole, one hand clutching a headless weed, the other holding a cook-book, till finally the vague current of her thoughts allowed her to move again, and whistling loudly, tunelessly, she entered the house.

Immediately life fell upon her with the soft clatter of a dropped pack of cards. Norah and Mrs. Doyle wrangled in the kitchen. A man came to solicit money for the Salvation Army.

"After lunch," she thought, and walking through the dining-room, she stopped to rub a spot off the sideboard, immediately and utterly forgetting her motive for coming into the room at all. "After lunch, I shall just lie down and take a little nap, I don't believe I've sat down once all day."

But after lunch, (on a tray in front of the window, the leaves of the morning paper strewn generously around on the floor), the telephone whirled with the rasp of an insect on an August night, and Soapy barked out of devastating boredom. Norah cleaning brass downstairs, ("I'm sure she's spilling polish on the hard wood floor, and it does eat into the wax so.") Norah dropped the andirons with the gesture of a man beating cymbals in an orchestra, determined to make the most of his moment, that has finally arrived.

The two worst possible bores came to call. Under the rumble of platitudes her mind leaped and darted like a speckled trout. How long will they stay, oh God, how long! Why do fat women with yellow faces wear light green?

Her eyes wandered to the book-cases. Those glass doors must be washed, you can hardly see the names. Does any one nowadays read *Rutledge* and *Misunderstood*? . . . How I loved them. Little wrinkles ran up the sides of her nose as she smiled.

Always the outer flow of conversation rambled on. Now and then, vaguely, she fell a little behind, repeated herself, asked meaningless questions. "How the children laugh at me when I do that . . . I must write Talbot after dinner."

It was when they had gone that she murmured to herself. "This has been a day." The room closed in about her with that intimacy of a late winter afternoon when it is nearly time to go upstairs and dress. Little rumbling noises crept out of the fire. Soapy snored heavily. At last, at last, she could sink into herself, think of nothing at all, have no demands made on her, just the luxury of sitting and staring.

The door clicked and swung. "Fred, is that you? Are you very cold? Just a minute, and I'll ring for more hot water. Did you have a hard day?"

"Well, we sold five hundred bales today. The market was good, silver has gone up. Skinner came into the office and I told him . . ."

His eyes were still very blue, sailor's eyes, puckered in the corners from squinting, a little faded now, almost the color of that china cow she had had as a little girl. It was really a jug, you lifted it up by the tail, and poured the milk

out of its mouth, always a distinct shock to see. The jug and the green book with the gold title "Little George's Journey to the Land of Happiness," were always associated somehow—

"And what have you been doing today?" he was saying. "Been very busy?"

"Oh no, just the same old round. I don't really think I've done a single thing all day."

SAPHO

MARION BUSSANG 1932

*When did they last
Plait your hair,
By a deep sea?
Your purple hair?*

Did you tip back your head
Exquisitely?
And slip a soft smile
From your perfect lips?
Did you touch your dim hair
With your fingertips?


By a deep, cool sea,
One afternoon
Near Mytilene . . .

LONDON STREETS

ERNESTINE GILBRETH 1929

THE INTRODUCTION

For the pleasure of my readers as well as for my own, I must pick and choose those who have an itching inclination to be conducted through the London Streets. For their satisfaction and my own diversion we must be a company stouthearted and sturdy-legged. I shall not expose the vanities and vices of the town to those who smart easily, whose eyes, ears and noses are forever a matter of care and preservation. But if there be amongst you, a suitable temper to walk about and take a compleat view, I bid you welcome to our company. We'll take a turn quite round and then we shall escape nothing worth observing.

E have left a world of peace, law and traffic regulations, and come by foot to eighteenth century London. Here is the very metropolis of England, a city which is indeed the heart of the commercial and financial systems, the warehouse and clearing-house of business life. Stealthily it has crept along the lines of existing roads or old country lines, frequently submerging the cow-pastures themselves. Ever widening, it extends through new and further roads. Here is a growing residential district, alive with unceasing progress and more definitely, congested masses of people. Here are streets straggling in every direction, topsy-turvy with life and action.

There remain many dark alleys, foul, dismal and devoid of light or fresh air. Narrow streets retain their ancient paving of hard stone hammered into the ground, their filthy gutters sometimes a succession of stagnant puddles, sometimes almost a rapid stream. Broader streets are beginning to be provided with flat paving of freestone; the more important ones have posts. The dangerous kennel in the middle of the streets tends to be replaced by gutters on either side. One looks in vain for curbs. Obstacles to ventilation, light and walking, project from the houses. But there are

suggestions of improvement. The old personal obligation of each householder to pave and keep in repair the street in front of his own door, has been replaced by a commission appointed for this very purpose.

Before these changes due to the new Paving Acts, of streets had suggested a colony of Hottentots. It was difficult to restrain the night men and scavengers from emptying their carts in the streets. The accumulated filth thrown out from the doors and windows of neighboring houses meant "a menace to health and safety." Householders invariably failed to sweep the road in front of their houses. The passerby was constantly in fear of stumbling into a projecting balcony, unfenced open cellar, or unprotected coal-shoot. Should he escape being struck by a falling flower-pot, there was still danger of being drenched by spouts projecting from the house-tops.

But many inconveniences still characterize the streets. In spite of continued effort to bring the houses into line, there are shops, especially on the smaller streets, which throw out bay windows, or doorsteps advancing into the narrow pathway. The pavement remains in a ruinous condition even where it consists of nothing but round stones; there is constant danger of bullocks driven through the streets. One is never safe from the packs of dogs taught to defend the house, to fly at strangers and to fight in the ring. Crowds of beggars swarm back and forth. A merciless procession of street-cries jibes with the bawling from the shops.

In the early part of the century, the lighting as well as the paving was considered the personal responsibility of the householders. Lights were supposed to be hung out during the six winter months from six to eleven P. M. on dark nights by the calendar. (On eighteen nights in each moon.) The shops which were usually kept open until eight or nine o'clock in the evening, made the streets quite agreeable with their half-hearted lights. But it was nevertheless necessary for those who sallied forth in the evening, to be accompanied to and from their card parties, by 'prentices carrying clubs. The Paving Acts however, brought both the lighting power and the new paving projects under a body of trustees. Also, as in the case of paving, to no purpose. The lamps which were lit at sunset, were mostly out by eleven o'clock, because the lighters stole most of the oil.

The streets have their distinct atmosphere. Local odors of all varieties and degrees of intensity, keep the pedestrian ever-conscious of his sense of smell. Thames Street is the region of fish and meat markets and oil merchants. Past Fleet Street one becomes aware only of the noxious open stream at the foot of Ludgate Hill. It is a relief to reach "the perfumed paths of fair Pall Mall." Indeed as Gay points out in *Trivia*

"Experienced men inur'd to city ways
Need not the Calendar to count their days."

Addison expands the subject in the *Spectator*, and emphasizes the prevalence of street-cries. "There is nothing which more astonishes a foreigner and frights a country squire." He divides them neatly into the vocal and instrumental. "As for the latter they are at present under great disorder. A freeman of London has the privilege of disturbing a whole street for an hour altogether with the twinkle of a brass kettle or frying pan." There are also the watchman's thump at midnight, the sowgelder's horn. But "Vocal cries are of much larger extent and indeed so full of incongruities and barbarisms that we appear a distracted city to foreigners." There are "the excessive alarms in turnip season", the call of the pickle hawkers "which like the song of the nightingale is not heard above two months". "And one cannot be deaf to the shrill note of the milkman, the hollow voice of the copper, and the sad and solemn air with which the public are often asked if they have any chairs to mend."

Attention is also attracted by the signboards hung out before almost every house. Monstrous, heavy with ironwork, they can be heard swinging ponderously in the wind, adding to the uproar of the streets. The sign painters enjoy a fine business and keep large stacks of them "both carved and painted, gilt grapes and sugar-loaves, lasts and teapots in the round, as well as the still familiar lions and white harts." Every shop has its sign of copper, pewter or wood, painted and gilt, some very magnificent.

The finest shops are scattered down the courts and passages. Those on Strand, Fleet Street and Cheapside are very elegant, enclosed with great glass doors and adorned on the outside with pieces of ancient architecture. The shops of the drapers are particularly beautiful, inspired by the

noble fronts of banking houses with emblematic statues over the doors. The windows of the jewelers and pawnbrokers concentrate upon resplendent window-displays to the public.

Many of the shops have some outward mark signifying the occupation of their tenants. The baker has a lattice; the ale-house, checkers; the barber his pole; the clothier, a golden sheep. But walking along the street one is aware of many less obvious objects—the milk-score chalked on every door-post; the “flying-barber” on a Sunday morning; white glove on a knocker to show the arrival of a child; pickpockets held under the pump, or the butcher’s orchestral band of morrow-bones and cleavers congratulating a wedding party.

But the *London Spy* in describing London, is more impressed by the number of advertisements “hung thick round the Pillars of each Walk. The Wainscote was adorn’d with Quacks Bills instead of Pictures. Never an Emperick in the town but had his name in a lacquer’d Frame containing a fair Invitation for a Fool and his Money soon to be parted.”

The streets seem alive with amateur roysterers and professional pickpockets and footpads. The criminals comprise the Bold-bucks and Hellfires. (We find no evidence pointing to the existence of Mohocks.) Less harmless are those whose favorite pastime is the breaking of windows or storming of hearses. The Apprentice boys evidently find in these harmless pursuits, their only outlet for amusement and exercise. Gambling, the club, tavern and alchouse were doubtless responsible for bad masters and consequently for troublesome apprentices. So we find these boys, any hour in the evening, shouting and clearing the pavement of all persons, boxing with those who dare to offer resistance, or in times of scarcity, fighting among themselves with sticks.

More serious are the rogue’s den, the smashing mint, the abodes of villains, thieftakers and informers, found in every street. Even in the busiest thoroughfares such as Ludgate Hill, the pedestrian must be prepared to fight with club or fists. The rogues themselves are limitless. The very women, even the common prostitutes, know how to use their fists as well as to rob.

Stealing of luggage occurs all day long. Without so much as a “By your leave,” the visitor to London may see his trunk disappear. Hackney coachmen stand in with the thieves and take their “regulars”. Everyone is a “smasher”

and a successful one. Caddees profess to be fellows hanging around for six penny jobs, but devote their energy to passing off bad money for good, and selling it to everyone for handsome profits. Picking pockets has also been reduced to a science. Thieves mix in every crowd, wherever there is any show or exhibiton of goods. "If a horse tumbles or a woman faints away, they run to increase the crowd and confusion; they create a bustle and try over the pockets of unsuspecting persons." Or they get up sham fights and calmly rob the bystanders.

All day long the streets resound with fighting. "The journeyman of every trade, the fellowship porter, the stevedor, the carter, the waggoner, driver, sailor, watchman," are prepared to defend the rights of the lower classes, should the occasion happily present itself. But gentlemen also carry into the streets a stout walking stick far more useful than a sword. They too are very anxious to use their fists and are eager for a bully shoving into the crowd, or a person taking the wall of everyone. It is considered a right and a pleasure to treat footpads and pickpockets to a cudgelling or the pump. In every crowd the hasty quarrel, the oaths and the blasphemies of disputants, the fight in the ring sure to be promptly formed either with fists or cudgels, mean the blocking of the streets by radiant onlookers who remain to see the ordeal by battle decided. At the mere suggestion of a disagreement, the porters and dogs run barking from all corners, and the handicrafts leave their garrets, making a circle about the boxers. The standers-by are careful to see the laws of combat strictly observed; they block and crowd the streets until the battle is decided.

We find aside from the vehement action in the streets, a motley group of people who make their living here. London is a favorite place for beggars and vagrants of all degrees and kinds. Any persons born with a defect or deformity, or maimed in such a way as to be rendered miserable, have free liberty of showing their nauseous sights to terrify people and force them to get rid of them. It is frequently the custom for those less hideously deformed to stir up business and competition by borrowing babies at 4d. a day from the parish nurses.

If the streets seem noisy and alive during the daytime, they are equally so at night. The city seems fairly to swarm

with waifs marching about in the dark, playing before the houses. *The London Spy* met such a "Gang of Tatterdemalions"—"A very young Crew of diminutive Vagabonds who marched along in rank and file like a little Army of Prestor John's Countrymen, as if in order to attack a bird's nest." "When questioned one of the Pert Frontiers answered—We Master, are the City Black Guards marching to our Winter quarters. Lord bless you Master, give us a Penny or a half-penny amongst us, and you shall hear us (if you please) say the Lord's Prayer backwards, swear the Compass round, give a new Curse to every step in the Monument, call a Whore as many proper names as a Peer has titles. We gave the poor Wretches a penny and away they tramped with a thousand God bless ye's, as Ragged as old Stockin' Mops, and I'll warrant you as Hungry as so many Cat-ta-Mountains. Yet seem'd as Merry as they were Poor, and as Contented as they were Miserable."

The London Spy is also a pretty judge of women and has much to say of the mistresses and whores found in abundance on every street. "They were to be had of all Ranks, Qualities, Colours, Prices and Sizes from the Velvet Searf to the Scotch-plaid petticoat. Commodities of all sorts went off, for there wanted not a suitable Jack to every Jill."

Quacks also conduct flourishing businesses, addressing the rabble and recommending vehemently, "A sound mind in a sound body as the Learned Doctor Honorificabilitudinitatibusque" has it, and selling "Pacquets of Universal Ho!dg-podg." One also finds innumerable Puppet shows where monkeys in balconies imitate men, and men, monkeys, to engage "some of the weaker part of the Multitude, as women and Children." *The London Spy* also engagingly describes the storekeepers "a parcel of Nimble Tungu'd Sinners" who leap out and swarm about the pedestrian like "so many Bees about a Honeysuckle, shrieking "Buy any Clothes?" Chimney-sweeps, the chandler with his basket, and the butcher with his greasy tray, likewise assail the unsuspecting.

Even on a respectable Sunday morning the streets are not bare of affronts. People going to church must fairly jump over rows of drunken men laid out on the pavement before the public houses. Even in the most respectable dis-

tricts the ears of ladies are offended by the bawling of coarse songs in the taverns, and by the balladmongers turning every event from a victory to the hanging of a highwayman into a ribald song.

Indeed the streets seem teeming with disorder. There is obviously no street patrol by day, no means of regulating the slow, congested traffic, of capturing thieves, of dispersing curious crowds. It is optimistically expected that the people themselves will preserve order. The Government does offer large rewards for the apprehension of street robbers, but to little effect. The city although spasmodically admonished to clean itself, to light itself, to rid itself of rogues, and to keep a guard at night, remains in an almost primitive state of unconsciousness. The watch is not set until nine o'clock in the winter, ten in the summer and spring, leaving therefore, four or five hours in complete darkness. But at night as well as day, it is true that the 'prentices are able and anxious to fight. They make an attempt to preserve order, in their own way.

The daily patrol or watch is inefficient and ineffective, subject always to uncomplimentary opinion and expression. The watchmen themselves are stout and sturdy fellows. Their fault is obviously not one of age, but of eagerness to take bribes. So the poor streetwalker, for example, in order to exist, has always to bribe the watch first, the constable next, and the magistrate (if she ever appears before him) last. These fellows:

“Do most thro’ Interest, and but few thro’ Zeal

Betwixt the Laws, and the Offender deal.”

(Ward, *The London Spy*.)

The great good that they seem to do in the streets is “to Disturb People every Hour with their Bawling, under pretence of taking care that they may sleep quietly in their Beds; and call every old Fool by name seven times a Night, for fear he should rise and forget it next Morning; and instead of preventing Mischief, make it, by carrying Honest persons to the Counter, who would fain walk peaceably home to their own Habitation; and provoke Gentlemen by their sauciness to Commit these Follies ’tis their business properly to prevent. In short, it is reasonable to believe they play

more Rogue's tricks than ever they Detect and occasion more Disturbances in the Streets than ever they Hinder."

* * * * *

Behind us the London Streets stretch into the distance. The pavement is more even now, and glides smoothly under one's feet. The crowds are less; the bellowing of songs and street-cries has become suddenly faint,—a mere jangle of notes flung upon the memory. There are only the ache of our legs, the jerk of our eyes, an imperceptible tingle of the ears, to recall the reality of this world so vital, so blundering with action. But these one treasures as something apart, yet personal, ever-resounding with life and vigor.

ISEULT

MARION BUSSANG 1932

Powerless, oh white beauty, to have gone
Bruising your marvellous feet over the stone,
Down into caverns under the sea alone;

Creeping into the dark, with the fetid chill
Of the deep and the cold and the silence trying to fill
Your wonderful hair and your eyes and your throat, until

Only a shadow stretched in the gloom is all
Left of the body of Iseult; never a tall
Candle lighting the rare head, dark in its fall.

AT THE SIGHT OF BLOOD

DOROTHY M. KELLEY 1931

ALWAYS afterward, at the sight of blood Lucha remember with sickening intensity the afternoon of the revolution. She felt an echo of the fear that had stretched tightly, like sharp, glittering wires, across the muffled sounds that came to them through the mattresses, which buttressed them under the table. Shots suddenly whirled, and hummed metallicly, followed by the crashing of heavy wooden doors, and screams of pain, clashing of steel, and trickle of crumbling plaster walls. Horses' hoofs clattered and rang on the cobblestones. Soft Spanish voices had turned hard and hateful, were cursing each other. The constant echoing of the bullets in the narrow street turned the air itself into a shrill roar which penetrated through the dull grey mattresses as if sight had been taken and only sound remained.

The reverberations of the shots, the thud of falling walls, the pulsations of the house, shook them like noiseless organ-pipes. The big door of the patio rattled. To the children it was like the shaking of the universe, to have that immense door waver. Suddenly, the cathedral bell pealed out, as if its fear had overcome its silence. The sustained ringing throbbed fainter and fainter and died into the air. At such a moment the well-loved, mellow striking could portend only evil. The glass of a window-pane crackled and tinkled to the floor. Bobbie began to pray rapidly and incongruously, "Now I lay me down to sleep," just as fast as his stiffened lips could chant. Lucha realized that Inez had been sobbing mechanically, but was evidently now wearied into silence.

The stuffiness between the mattresses was unbearable, they could breathe only hot, musty air through the padded greyness. Lucha tried frantically to awake from this noisy, trembling, hot nightmare. One must always awake before anything too awful happened. She pulled at the corner of the mattress and crept out.

Through the balcony-window by the table, she could see caverns of twisting smoke and dust, glimpses of vague dark figures grappling with each other, the black flash of guns, sweaty, distorted faces, the downward gleam of steel knives. Right outside the window, clear of the smoke, a palm tree waved its long fringed arms languidly, just as if men were not fighting and dying before it. The haze dissipated a little. A black snorting horse reared as his rider fell. He was a young man shot in the forehead so that blood seemed streaming from his sightless eyes. Lucha shivered with horror and shrank back against the mattress. She raised her head again at the sound of staggering foot-steps. A man came reeling into the room, holding his arm. Blood spurted between his fingers. The whole room turned bloody red to Lucha, gleaming, wet red, then dark red, then black, and she could not remember after that.

MANANA

SALLIE S. SIMONS 1930

*(Fishermen on Monhegan say that Captain
John Smith landed there about 1612)*

The summer people have drilled four holes in a broad-standing rock and nailed up a tablet to his name.

They feel proud as they hurry by to post their manuscripts and their thickly wrapped canvasses,

And they think, "He sought and found. Grateful, we cut the letters of his name in bronze. *My* work is praised, fulfills its purpose. I wish someone would lay *my* ghost like that when I am gone."

But the men who walk with their arms full of fish nets and amber glass floats, never see the tablet.

They are looking with the eyes of John Smith across the channel to Manana,

Across the sucking tides that curl back from its cliffs to bare revolving milk-green cones,

Across the gathering tides that plunge against reefs where spray falls with a hissing sigh.

Only five hundred yards of water, yet these men know, though they are simple, that their dories will not reach the island.

Their quittance comes in listening for the foam at night as it edges around the sharp shore, in watching colors shifting on the grass at the cliff top, where no trees grow.

When they go past the tablet every morning they are looking toward the channel;

They are thinking that John Smith never reached Manana.

THE LEKYTHIOS

FRANCES RANNEY 1929

A SMALL, round man bounded down the steps of the Field Museum, his fat cheeks quivering with the motion. As he reached the street, he pulled down the frayed and tightly-buttoned coat that had wrinkled toward his collarless neck in the precipitous descent. Blood-shot eyes glancing furtively about him, he patted a bulging pocket. After assuring himself of the innocent and unsuspecting nature of the bypassers, he leaned against a tree so that he might survey the building from which he had just departed.

The smooth, white pillars of the Museum rested on the horizon with the harmonious calm and simplicity of an Athenian temple. The azure tints of the sky and the sparkling green-blue hues of Lake Michigan served to accentuate its whiteness.

The small round man did not recognize this classical resemblance. In fact, he had not the faintest notion of the implications of the word "classical." He did know, however, that nothing marred the peace of the building. No brass-buttoned official appeared on the steps, shrieking whistle to his lips.

A sigh of relief escaped his puffy mouth. There was no evidence of any chase. Luck was with him, for once. Drawing a greasy cap and a dozen new pencils from a baggy pocket, he shuffled on down the street, a grinning, sheepish expression on his bloated face.

"Nice new pencils. Nice yellow pencils. Five cents apiece. Silly John wants a cup of coffee. Help poor Silly John," he whined.

It was a chilly day, but the sunlight bathed the sidewalks with a yellow warmth. He would have liked, no doubt, to squat down in it, doubling his legs under him in a pitiful, crippled position, but Silly John was in a hurry today. At short intervals his grimy fingers caressed the cool, smooth object in his pocket.

He turned up Michigan Boulevard on the east side. He

usually crossed over to where streams of people passed before the shop windows, but today he chose the opposite side, where the sidewalks was empty but for the lingering hoboes and tramps that watched the endless iron and smoke of the Illinois Central Railway. Here no one would notice him. He felt safe.

An old friend sidled up to him, his shifty, heavy-lidded eyes shadowed by smoked spectacles. It was Frank, the "blind" fiddler, whom John had met at various Salvation Army lodging houses and with whom he had often shared a newspaper blanket when the weather permitted sleeping on the ground in Grant Park. Silly John did not like the smoked spectacles—they made him uncomfortable.

"Got the price of a drink on yer?" Frank whimpered, his voice as high and thin and tuneless as that of his cheap violin.

"Nope Business rotten," answered John, staring directly at the smoked glasses with exaggerated unconcern.

"Aw, y'er no kind of a sport," the beggar whined, tapping his cane impatiently. "Wot's the idea? Wot y'er over here for if y'aint a'ready made yer pile this mornin'? On yer vacation, maybe, huh!"

"Shut up! I haven't made a cent yet this mornin'. S' help me, 's the truth." A sly, cautious expression came into Silly John's narrowing eyes.

"Why don't ya get over where people is 'n make some then, ya idiot," the blind man snarled, tap-tapping on down the sidewalk.

As Silly John went on, avoiding the eyes of any acquaintance he could chance to pass, a sharp gnawing doubt crept into his consciousness. Luck had been with him too long—it could not last. By this time the Museum officials must have discovered that a certain pale, smooth object was missing from its glass case. Soon they would track him down. It was always that way whenever he stole anything, for he was a fool. He could not think straight like other people. He could not even remember, now, why he had stolen what he had. He did not even know what it was called, or for what it was used. He was a fool. Jail inevitably followed his luck—jail, with a bed and good food, but no whiskey!

Beads of perspiration broke out on his dirt-creased neck.

Frank! Had "Blind Frank" suspected anything? He had been suspicious of his presence on the east side of the street, to be sure. Could he have sensed anything else? What an idiot he had been to say that about not having any money so far this morning. But he always made mistakes—he could not think straight.

Soon he reached the Art Institute with its dingy pillars and smoke-lined friezes. Around to the side Silly John shuffled, the cap with the yellow pencils in his hands. He reached the "Five Sisters" and stood watching the jets of sparkling water fill the air with crystal beads. He liked this fountain; the water was as cold and silvery as the side of a fish.

He leaned over the rail and looked into the sliding, shining bottom of the fountain. There, beneath the bent knee of one of the "sisters" was a hollow just large enough for an object the exact size of the one he had, hidden in his pocket. No one was in sight. Swiftly sliding his hands into the cold, clear water, he concealed his treasure.

He hurried away.

At noon time he bought a can of baked beans and got some coffee at a lunch wagon down on Canal Street. He was satisfied with himself. He, Silly John, who could not think as other people did, had accomplished something. He had stolen a beautiful "thing"; it was smooth and had pale colors on it. No one had seen him. Moreover, he had concealed it in a spot where not even the cleverest or most brass-buttoned person in the world could find it. It was his, his very own, to keep and look at occasionally, there beneath the sliding water.

As soon as the sun went down and mists began to gather over the lake, Silly John, with his waddling shuffling walk, made straight for the "Five Sisters" fountain. He would look once more at the pale, beautiful object he had stolen.

He splashed his hands into the cool water and felt along the bottom. It was not there! Frantically, he slid his fingers over the smooth surfaces of the statues. It was not there! He splashed the water about, and tears ran down his fat, red cheeks. Someone had taken his beautiful "thing". Frank! It must have been "Blind Frank" with his staring, smoked glasses. And yet, how could he have known?

Silly John stopped splashing the water and sat down by the side of the fountain. Luck was always the same.

In the Tribune the following day, this article appeared:

Valuable Lekythos Stolen

A priceless Greek funeral urn of the eighth century B. C. was stolen from its glass case in the Field Museum yesterday morning. The glass was broken, and the beautiful polychrome lekythos forcibly removed. As there were many visitors to the Museum during the morning, there are, as yet, no clues as to its whereabouts. The Director places the loss at \$20,000."

Under the cool, wet knee of one of the "Five Sisters", the palely-colored lekythos lies forgotten. Silly John does not remember, for he can not think like other people.

GARDENIAS

EDITH STARKS 1929

There are no words in my heart
As delicately penetrative
As the breath of one of these.
I would tell you that I love you;
That as I lay these flowers
Fragile, white, and rare
For the last time, here before you
On the cool marble altar of your passing—
It is consecration.
They are beautiful! and wounding . . .
They have eased my pain.



BOOK REVIEWS



SCARLET SISTER MARY

JULIA PETERKIN

Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis, 1928

The work of such writers as Julia Peterkin is of two-fold interest; and a critic should remember its double value. Universality mixes with purely local elements, based on background, on the little social group discussed, and on dialect, in every novel or play. But sometimes one element overbalances the other; sometimes their separation comes to us sharply, where background has been made so picturesque or so remote as to stand alone. Sabatini, Stevenson, Conrad, Knut Hamson, Bret Harte and Hardy can be judged as writers simply by their success at the weaving of the two themes; and how many stand the test? Add indefinitely to this list of men who choose their peculiar background; and still we return to Thomas Hardy, who in the end is the strongest, the wisest; the man who has strength to face the universal and the particular both at once, and remain clear-sighted. And Raphael Sabatini exemplifies the man who rides his horse backwards into thickets of sentimentalized history. The two extremes, one so easy to drift towards, the other so far above common power, may easily be found in the literature of the American negro, who is sometimes sentimentalized, sometimes ridiculed, but almost never understood. To all the other forces of the particular—dialect stronger than any other in America; setting, whether in the crowded negro sections of cities, or on the southern plantation; and private customs, is added the subject of racial difference: color, history, social prejudice, and the strangeness of savagery mixed with Americanism. More closely than ever the reader watches the author's point of view here. For no American author,

we believe, can write a book on the negro unprejudiced. How far, in fact, can he or she indulge in the universal?

Mrs. Peterkin is a southern woman who has observed this people from the vantage-point, by inheritance, of the mistress; but by taste and by inheritance also, it appears, as a friend. It is difficult to define such a relationship. Certainly it does not grow out of a breaking-down of barriers; more, it derives from the special love of the good master or mistress for the good plantation ducky. Children nursed by their mammies, and allowed to play with the servants' children, often grew old before they dropped their negro accent; they turned to the mammy or the old cook oftener than they would to any French or English governess; they did not doubt their own position, nor did they express it. The intimacy of a long life together and of plantation solitude bound southerners, very often, to their negroes. Of such experience, Julia Peterkin continues to interest herself in the darkies, neither condescending nor theorizing, but watching sympathetically. We know that she must always be conscious that these are a special people whom she describes; but we must also remember that she chose them, and has so far kept to them, for her subject. Hers are not the leaders of the negroes in America, traveled and sophisticated; nor are they the town negroes treated by Du Bose Heyward; they are people closest to Africa, who made one move when they came to America; and have remained since the Civil War in the same state that preceded it.

What are the special limiting characteristics of that subject? I need not mention the language which has been compounded of African dialect and the provincial English of the south. There are three chief facts which set the negroes apart: simplicity; the part that nature plays for them; and superstition. Simplicity describes the back ground: a narrow street of huts; broad cotton-fields; woods; a single little shop, Grab-All, that gets their money; and a boat that connects them with town. It describes their elementary and elemental life; they raise vegetables and cotton; keep pigs and chickens; supply each other with everything they need in the village, save clothes; and it suggests their pleasures from the nature of their work. This simplification extends to Julia Peterkin's books, which show not that false simplification which becomes mere mechanical book-writing, but

an easy routine which emphasizes the passions and events of life, making pleasure and catastrophe both easy; making the characters pattern their lives without blurrings by the necessities of food and livelihood, and by love and hate. Religion also is emotional; love and hate; but it concerns itself strongly with superstition.

Nature, says Mrs. Peterkin, is kind to darkies; and in life, as in her book, it neither dominates them utterly, nor retires into a landscape background. The seasons and men's occupations and also their emotions change all together, a part of a whole. Plants, crops, animals and men all undergo the same general processes of life. That is why negroes talk so intimately to animals. But negroes can sow crops, and pluck cotton, and sell it for clothing. If nature roots up the garden and damages the house, it pays back later by drawing up the seed into plants.

Superstition proceeds naturally from the combination of nature's tremendous intimacy with the negroes, and from the simplicity of their natures. They are a new people in America, but old in Africa, and uncivilized; and many of the old beliefs have been transplanted with the first men and women to new soil. Somebody taught them about Jesus; and they believe in him too. And in hell. And they fear God the Father. But underlying this religion lives their own, which grew from nature, and which puts spirit into inanimate things. For emotion and pleasure, they put on shoes on Sundays and go to meeting; they bring up their children to have a vision, and repent of their sins; to be baptized, and become members of the church. Then they can join the shouting. This is a part of religion, and seeking grace, and avoiding the Everlasting Bonfire. But outside, they can go to old Daddy Cudjoe, and get the right kind of charm to put magic over a man, or send the devil out of the soup, or save a life. Daddy Cudjoe governs the force which can help people, having got it from his ancestor who came from the older country as a conjurer. Even an old woman like Maum Hannah, in whose house all Christian meetings are held when the church is closed, recognizes that nothing else can help. "In the old days, all the people trusted to magic to rule and river and clouds and seasons as well as their tools and each other, but times have changed. Only Daddy Cudjoe, of all the old people left, knew any of the old secret ways."

When Maum Hannah's adopted child Mary lost her husband's love, the old woman told her that "If she had stayed a good Christian girl, as she started out to be, then God might have listened to her prayers. But she sinned. She was a fallen member. She would have to depend on magic now, the only power that will work as well for a sinner as it does for a Christian." And everything needs to be charmed sooner or later; "Everything gets out of order and gives trouble sometimes. Men and women and pots and pans and axes; everything needs to be ruled." Evidently all the things in the world fall under spells; and only magic can really help. At least it is more generous and tolerant than Christian religion for helping people. Jesus is a kind gentleman, very mild; but hell too must be included in a church-goer's belief. Magic does not threaten with hell.

This, then, is the darky's world: land; his house and tools; his neighbors whom he knows from birth to death, since he does not travel; the rules and privileges of church-going; and the mysterious service of magic. Everything is partly magical to him.

Since *Black April*, Mrs. Peterkin has lightened her emphasis upon superstition. Conjure and charms play a part; but they do not rule the destiny of the characters. The earlier book was gigantic and terrifying; April himself walked in it like a hero, full of a hero's strength and fatal self-confidence. He was conjured, and he died miserably. The book itself was complicated and powerful; while nature in its jungle supremacy seemed to press in upon the village of black people, defying them, defied by them. We remember April catching a rattle-snake behind the head, holding it at arm's length while he squeezed his hand close about its throat, and spitting into its hissing mouth. Meanwhile the little boy, his illegitimate son, waited beside him with a knife to cut out the sting, if April should miss and be bitten. We remember too the heavy theme of charms and African rites that filled the jungle to our imagination with shadows of horror. *Scarlet Sister Mary*, on the contrary, has been simplified to a single story of few characters. Being a woman's story, it leaves the jungle for the narrow street, and the men and women who live there; while the pots and pans of Si' Mary's hearth are as important. The storms that disturb her crops, and the weather that is answered by the growing things in her yard

and by the animals tethered there alone reach her; she responds like all living things to the spirit of the seasons; but she does not know their horror. Her tragedy is told in human terms, when the husband that she loves deserts her. Her physical recovery is effected by physical excitement; her spirit never heals entirely, for when that first man returns at last, she cannot face him with a whole mind. She learns tolerance and wisdom with experience; and she knows that she has seen more of pleasure and sorrow than stuffy good women do. When she goes to Daddy Cudjoe for a charm to use on her husband, she cannot bear after all to try it at once; and he gets away before she acts. So she uses it on other men. But if the sophisticated reader wishes, he can disregard the charm; the story is a universal, almost a hackneyed theme, which would have grown from her nature alone. Yet the book remains faithful; less congested than *Black April*; less legendary. The portrayal of negro temperament and negro belief is as true; the theme is less specialized. The two books supplement each other. From the heroic to the common-place, from the ornate to the simple, from grand racial legend to more obscure individual life, Mrs. Peterkin has carried her interest in this people. It is significant that *Scarlet Sister Mary* has on the whole less dialogue, and therefore less dialect, than its fore-runner. Singly, it will not be as impressive as *Black April*; but together with it, the new book will define more clearly than before the point of view which readers must have been hunting. Mrs. Peterkin has never made the mistake of pointing a moral. It is our snobbery as readers which will over-emphasize the racial element. We must remember that there is scarcely a white person in either book; they might have been written of a world of negroes. But the race in its own characteristics is perfectly defined; and human nature, which we call psychology today, is faithfully treated. The first novel paid that race the compliment of telling a deeply stirring heroic story for the race itself; the second shows one of its members in her full resemblance to our own people. The special and the general have both been shown, then. Thirdly, Julia Paterkin has in *Scarlet Sister Mary* added to literature one more analysis of a character often damned by moralists, and sometimes over-dramatized; a character whom Mrs. Peterkin has

treated not as a thing apart, leperized; but as a sensitive individual, close to our own experience.

A. L. B.

JOSEPH AND HIS BRETHREN

H. W. FREEMAN

Henry Holt and Co. 1929

With the eastern part of Suffolk, England as his background, H. W. Freeman tells the story of Crakenhill Farm and the Geaiter family. For *Joseph and his Brethren* is most concerned with the farm itself, which dominates the lives of Old Benjamin and his sons.

It is evident that Benjamin Geiter was nobody's fool and that he bought the old place with his eyes open. Contrary to all previous experience in spite of unfavorable predictions. Crakenhill flourished and improved from year to year. "Benjamin had always had to struggle against a world that he was used to regard as his natural enemy. But for all that, he did not spare his enemies, even his own sons." He put them to work immediately, with his "old dogged and systematic energy." Like Crakenhill, they flourished, each year becoming sturdier, more firmly rooted to the soil. And it was not until middleage that any of the "boys" realized how unstintingly they had given, how faithfully they had toiled, how tightly bound they had become to every inch of their precious two hundred acres.

Throughout the novel runs a twofold domination. Stronger is the land which demands unsparingly, receiving alike the strength and the devotion of its men. All except Ben the oldest son, grow impatient, balance it against an outside attraction. Bob and Hiram start their runaway trip to Canada, "the new country." But it is "the summerland of ourn, so neat and reg'lar all over" and the "rare fine horses they are, to plow" that send them sheepishly back. Ern, on the point of volunteering, forgets the glamour of an Army uniform, for his sows farrowing without him, and plunges desperately across the fields to Crakenhill. Again pride and love of the farm, more definitely the chance bleating of a restless ewe, force Harry to cast aside Jessie and dreams of marriage. So Benjamin's five sons remain uncomplaining, stolid, silent slaves from morning until night. Over them the

father holds his rod of iron, insists on showing himself the master of the house. He proves it by seducing Nancy. When her condition is evident: "You thought you were going to get Nance and you didn't." He had seen them gathering cowslips and following her about the kitchen. Benjamin wasn't blind yet.

This is not indeed the subjection to the soil, described by Tolstoi or Turgenev—the cruel exaction of unmitigated toil. There is none of the lack of balance between the rich and the poor, no hopeless, thankless servitude, snuffing man's energy until he is left only feebly glimmering like a burned ash. Freeman is concerned with an absolute devotion to the soil, which keeps the Geaiters fighting against nature certainly, but which includes the joy of possession, of struggling, an immense satisfaction that the land is being brought "into good heart." Is it not enough to know that Crakenhill has become the best farm in the whole county?

One is struck by the similarity between the life of the Geaiters and that of Isak and Inger in the *Growth of the Soil*. Both Hamsun and Freeman deal with the direct relationship of man to the earth. There is no trace of artifice, of complexity, of subjectivity. The development of Isak is epical, timeless; man, evolving, building. It is told objectively, with an absolute impersonality, a magnificently elemental strength. The progress of the Geaiters is similar. They are unlimited by time; they might exist in any farming district. But they are more definitely a unit, a family revolving about Crakenhill, restricted in orbit. Like Hamsun, Freeman is objective, tells his story directly, and permits his characters to live their vigorous silent lives unhampered by analysis or explanation. But the writer cannot resist stopping to breathe the delicate sweetness of the cowslips, to count the five speckled sky-blue eggs reposing in the bottom of a little round nest, or to see the earth and sky, after the faint October sky has vanished, meeting in a dark embrace.

Both the Geaiter family and Crakenhill remain singularly untouched by time. They live in the seasons coming and going swiftly, necessitating the cutting of beans or the ploughing and seeding of a field. But the years themselves pass silently, imperceptibly. It is only Benjamin's dramatic death in the fields, or Nancy's remarriage, or Joey's love affair, that marks off a broader spacing, jerking one to the

reality of events. Yet with no surprise, the reader watches the brothers drawing more closely together, pathetically overtaken by middle-age and no longer sure of their strength. Young Joey shoots up and becomes taller and stronger than any of them. But it is perfectly plausible for his five half-brothers to be "as proud as if he had been their own son." The whole development has been managed with perfect consistence. The reader, like the characters, has so lost himself in the prevalence and importance of everyday necessities, of minor incidents, that the general trend of events remains woven distantly into the background. The interest centers increasingly upon "Nance's boy," although the emphasis remains to the last, on Crakenhill. The title vigorously asserts itself, "Joseph and his Brethren." Freeman's concern is now Joey's learning to plow and mow, while the others watch over him with fatherly care, correcting him and guiding his hands, "each telling him all that he knew". With characteristic restraint, he indicates the unspoken affection between these silent men, their mutual love of Crakenhill, and even stronger, their devotion to Joey. But Joey has his own problems to solve, the weighing of outside excitement against the earthy beauty of the farm, Daisy's happiness balanced against that of his brothers. Penetrating every decision, is the hold of the soil, the quick joy of working in the clover with a scythe, with one's shoulders bowed "like a sapling in the wind."

Every page of the book smacks of the earth. Unconsciously it portrays the beauties of nature. There is always the contact of man, elemental, direct, free from artifice. But it is not in this alone that Freeman is successful. He has created from Suffolk background, a group of characters typical and definitely of a group, yet so individualized that they remain sharply differentiated in the memory. Without comment or analysis, he has presented men and women who live.

E. M. G.

THE LOST LYRIST

ELIZABETH HOLLISTER FROST

Harper & Brothers 1928

"Be sure yourself and your own reach to know,
How far your genius, taste and learning go;
Launch not beyond your depth, but be discreet,
And mark that point where sense and dullness meet."



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Before Pope's admonishing words one quails at attempting just criticism, particularly when the work in question is lyric poetry. With narrative poetry one can side-track skillfully on dramatic effect and characterization. But lyrics are more intangible, concerned immediately with the emotional reaction; they are more various in form and more dependant upon it. They must be handled like butterflies, carefully, lest one brush the shining dust from their wings. And one must always realize that no two people will feel a poem in exactly the same way. The quality and extent of the appreciation is an individual matter.

I may point out to those for whom the quotation from the *Essay on Criticism* has recalled the whole trend of eighteenth century critical thought that poetry has, on the whole, divorced itself from an emulation of the classics. It is a far cry from Pope to Sandburg. Poetry today is in a period which some future commentator will be sure to brand "transitional". We are not yet convinced beyond all doubt of the success of free verse. We have not yet reached a satisfactory definition of poetry which reveals its undeniable and eternal essence. With Humbert Wolfe we still debate form and content, rhythm and thought, in spite of a general agreement that they are both important; and we are piqued because we cannot reduce the art to a scientific formula and the exact knowledge of the proportionate ingredients. In the face of an argument which has been going on for centuries, and the wise couplets of Pope, criticism of poetry becomes perilous. One may well throw up his hands and say in dismay, "Que sais-je?" However, with necessity at the heel, one is still justified to ask in poetry significance and originality of expression, sincerity, and successful use of verse form or of the lack of it. The whole, resulting from a proper but mysterious balance of these qualities is an aesthetic experience of some value.

The Lost Lyrist would probably never have been written if Mrs. Frost had not encountered profound sorrow at the death of her husband. Her poetry is clearly the *necessary* expression of a sensitive personality saturated with a terrible and steadily growing sense of loss. It grows out of, is dedicated to and embodies an extra-ordinarily beautiful love and the grief which forced it into words.

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"Joy flickers out in grief articulate
And my first song strikes, startled, on the air."

It is the revelation of an experience of unbearable poignancy because it is an experience inevitably universal. One reads almost shyly, with the same embarrassment which makes one avoid looking at the distorted face of a woman crying. The implication is not that Mrs. Frost's poems are cut out of the first uncontrolled burst of emotion, but that their intimacy and their exposure of the clarity and depth of the lost relationship lay open the innermost chamber of sorrow. One looks within with a sense of trespassing. Yet it is an unrealized privilege, for if we see and understand the complete emotion which gave birth to these lyrics, we have looked into a crucible of experience and have seen the molten material of poetry. In *The Lost Lyrist* that material has been poured out and cooled into tangible forms. Whether or not the poems are great art, they bear the marks of the creative pain of great art.

We cannot doubt, then, the significance of Mrs. Frost's book in poetry's inescapable reference to life, or the sincerity. I, personally, cannot give sincerity too high a place in any literature. Nothing is more disgusting than the travesty of any emotion for the sole sake of a rhyme, or a name in print, or a fad. Poetry must satisfy an inner need (if I may use a highly romantic phrase), and it has no value of its fundamental structure is not truth. Knowing how simply Mrs. Frost turned to it for relief and for no other reason, we cannot question her sincerity. It is, therefore, a difficult problem to deal with certain of her poems which may be called "sentimental", although it is a treacherous term. She does not indulge her motions to the point of being mawkish or maudlin. The failure lies less in the content than in the embodiment of it. The minor tone and fragile style of Edna St. Vincent Millay turn up proverbially. (One feels that Miss Millay is losing ground rapidly because of her prolific followers, and pays a severe price for being so imitable.) Occasionally the ghost of A. E. Housman stirs and casts a weak shadow of his lyric melancholy. These reflections, like the reflections on ruffled water, are not perfect, and without their original poise and finish have a second-hand quality which we term "sentimentality." Or Mrs. Frost has allowed in her poetry endearments and extravagances which in speech

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might be accompanied by a whimsicality and lightness which they lose, impressed into written form. Again, she has allowed herself to take a worn figure or a thread-bare word to convey her meaning. In all cases the failure seems to be a matter of carelessness, as though she permitted her emotion to take the most familiar and the easiest course of expression. This observation throws a new light on "sentimentality" showing it up as often purely a poor adaptation of form. One realizes the importance of that intermediary stage of a poem, between the stimulus and the finished product, in which the artist dissects, rearranges and proportions his generative idea. Neglect in this stage is dangerous.

Mrs. Frost's work is fortunately, however, uneven. Many of her lyrics do not merit such adverse criticism. The best are those which less obviously echo her predecessors, and they attain a fine simplicity. Their brevity is effective. It startles one and, being soon over, allows the slower reflections to flow around it. From *Respiration*—

"Stretched on the horizon
Eternity, asleep,
Drew in with his breathing
One of us to keep."

Suddenly quiet, the very smallness of her words betrays their overwhelming importance. She may say—

"Agony is something
It takes a while to make"

and the tense restraint is eloquent. One reads with a growing realization of the unusually beautiful relationship which has been lost. From *The Shattered Urn*—

"Marriage is an urn
Chiseled out of love
Fashioned by four hands
And the skill thereof:

Point and drill and file,
Turn it to the light,
Keep the tools from rust,
Never finish quite."

In her best moments her images are distinctive, again characterized by swiftness. In the line—

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"My thoughts fly backward from me like blown hair" is the essence of her verse, the aspiration and a suggestion of its spiritual quality. Besides this dedicated portion of her work, there is a close relation with actuality, a vivid descriptive sense. A house "wears a pale and narrow face", "a white wind pries the doors apart", there is a "poised breathless moment on the ledge of day." I succumb to the temptation to quote one of the most successful poems in the book because it is illustrative of all that is excellent in Mrs. Frost, particularly of her delicate imagination. She often expresses the feeling that a house retains a memory of its inhabitants and the stilled echoes of their footsteps, and is somehow wise to the life within it. One may guess that *Prescience* embodies for her a poignant experience.

"We kissed and laughed,
The lattice winked,
The chimney snorted,
The fire blinked;
The moonlight stepped
On the old stone floor,
The dark from the hall
Looked in through the door;
We did not remark
The cynical eyes
Of the candles,
Or hear the spark's surprise—
We thought we were safe
With our youth and You—
But I wonder now
If the house knew?"

If I have been prejudiced for Mrs. Frost in my criticism, it is because I believe in her poetry as the sincere expression of her life, and that at its best it has the significance and originality which I have stipulated as the requirements of the art. Knowing little of versification, I do not dare launch beyond my depths. I can only judge it negatively and say that it is conspicuous neither by its absence nor its presence. The form is (again, at its best) a smoothly running and pleasing vehicle for the burden of the thought.

It is highly doubtful that Mrs. Frost will ever become an outstanding figure in poetry. Her work is deficient in vigour to stand the buffeting of many years of criticism, it is not creative enough to be of eternal value. It lacks the

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authority which Humbert Wolfe demands in poetry. "Authority"" says Wolfe "means that the magic poet of all times recreates his material, and in the moment of recreation astonishingly assimilates his expression to that of his predecessors and of those who follow him." And authoritative verse of any age, language or form has fundamentally "the same calm accent of finality." Which makes poetry a case of perspective and evolution, and the poet a magician. We may safely say, however, that *The Lost Lyrist* lacks authority inasmuch as we understand by authority that "finality" and powerful beauty of expression which is timeless. It is too frail to live long. But it will find a small circle of readers kindly because they understand this well-spring of poetry, and a word or so of praise is owed to this quiet and delicate monument to sorrow.

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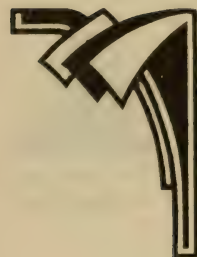
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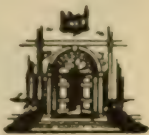
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That delicious interval

When the curtain goes down,
and the lights come up, and
the landaulet is waiting . . .
in that interval, so to speak,
between supper and Sardou
. . . a good cigarette seems to
acquire a New Significance.
. . . And perhaps you have
noticed that Camels always
play the leading rôle in these
gay little comedies of pleasure.





Smith College Monthly



WRANGLING AT NIGHT

ELIZABETH BOTSFORD

IATE in the afternoon it began to rain, an infinitesimal rain descending in thin gray clouds which lay around the mountain peaks like chiffon scarfs. When we left the camp about seven o'clock, an opaque dusk had already begun to fill the high valley where our tepees were pitched, rising up from remote bottomlands and the lower slopes of the mountains like a strange vapour that darkened the sight. We abandoned the bright crackle of the cook fire, the clatter of voices and the sizzling bacon smell for the hostile embrace of a slow wet wind. There was no sound as we crossed the opening to the timber but the squelching of our boots in the boggy ground and the rattle of the stiff bridles hung over our arms. In a few moments pine and balsam boughs thrust themselves darkly between us and the camp. The trees were not thickly set, but the forest floor was littered with enormous fallen trunks that reared grotesque roots over our heads. They left rank caverns where they had once stood, filled with hummocks of crumbling loam and colossal fragments of bark. If we separated we were immediately lost from one another in the brush and the debris of hundreds of years. It was bad going and we clambered without words, pushing slowly up towards the pass. A chill silence made our foot-steps sound doubly laborious, and a rotted log giving way beneath one's heel echoed and re-echoed. Before we realized it we were in the depths of the forest, surrounded by tall spruce darkness. I held tightly to the memory of the tepees as I had seen them last, illumined from within by small fires

which metamorphosed them into dully glowing cones haunted by impossible shadows. I remembered the angles of the poles and the lacework the smoke had made among them.

A half hour of steady walking and still no break, no increased light to reveal the end of the timber. A fawn soared out of the brush above us at our left, paused a moment to stare at us with brilliant eyes and wide-spread delicate ears. We stopped and stared back. It seemed almost as though he understood a kinship among us. We moved toward him slightly. He flung up his head as the alien scent disturbed his nostrils, turned in mid air and went up the mountain in long rubber-legged bounds. His white tail flashed into a thicket. . . . There was no trail to follow. We were the first people in years to penetrate this high and silent heart of the Rockies. We could not find the faint tracks we had made riding in, or the scattering trail of the horses when they had wandered back to graze. The motionless and soundless hostility of the forest confused us. An endless wilderness of rain-soaked trees folded us into its cold breast.

The sensation was that of a shade rising slowly and without warning, allowing greater light. We saw a clear ridge above us, dully covered with the faded lupin of August. From the top of it we could look back down the valley where a wavering feather of smoke distinguished itself only by motion from the steel dusk. In front of us the pass spread out widely, a long flat-bottomed valley laced with streams which descended abruptly from precipitous summits. The peaks on either side formed barriers of incredible height to the world beyond them. At their feet lay a jumbled mass of iron gray rock, armor that they had cast aside during the long restless years. I drew a deep breath. The air seemed fresher here, quickened by a sharp wind that had a flavour of snow. At the foot of the shoulder on which we were standing, two of the pack horses nuzzled the bare ground, the aged bony Nitchie and white Duncan with the sore back. They snorted when they saw us and moved away warily. We passed them, descending to the floor of the pass. A quarter of a mile away, nine or ten more horses hung together in a draw, and beyond them, across the valley, was a larger group. We could pick out outstanding ones as we approached, Patches, White, Blue Robin, Redwing, Flossie and her colt, Snake, the never trusting, grazed apart, nervous and forlorn.

A long stretch of glacial mud lay between us and the horses. The main westward running stream was fed by thousands of rivulets and seepings which had so undermined the grassy stretches that one had to climb for firm ground. Ted plowed ahead determinedly, jumping over the soft spots like a boy playing hop-sotch. Hegie was behind me, whistling his foreign tunes. Occasionally he would stop long enough to mutter about the wet. The bridles clinked and crackled, the water under our feet gurgled as it oozed in and out of our boots. The wind grew colder and darkness was at its heels. We hurried.

Close upon the first group we put the bridles behind our backs and assumed the appearance of an innocent visit. Ted stepped tactfully up to Tex, holding out the salt. The wise old buckskin sniffed, pricked up his ears and stretched out his lean neck. Ted began to croon to him—

“Come Tex. Steady, boy. Steady, old fellow.”

But Tex was wise in the ways of wrangling. He reached out a long pale tongue, then ducked from under Ted’s rapid hand and whirled away. Out of reach he plunged and bucked viciously to display his temper. (He was the mildest horse in the outfit.)

“Damn,” Ted murmured. “We’ll never catch him now, the old fox.” Yet with his peculiar patience with horses he again offered the salt, making low musical noises in his throat. Tex shook his head with an air of finality, kicked up his heels and clattered away. From a safe distance he watched us, his head set defiantly in the wind. Here on this lonely pass he had taken on a wildness and spirit which were hard to reconcile with his familiar docility. Ted lifted his shoulders resignedly and caught Big Jack, an enormous lanky bay.

Hegie now ceased to be a respectful spectator. He turned to me with a wide grin. His even white teeth gleamed in the brown of his face. “I catch for you Prince. You ride him. He ban for bareback one good horse.” He began an absurdly dignified approach upon that dozing animal, then pounced upon him suddenly. The bridle was over Prince’s head before he woke up. Hegie was triumphant. “See,” he nodded “Not hard.”

Prince’s body was wet and slippery with the rain, but it was warm between my knees. I settled myself on his fat back and let him toss himself resentfully. His muscles moved

smoothly under my legs. We left Hegie doggedly pursuing Baby Face, his own saddle horse, up the draw, and rode over to the larger bunch. Ted looked like a small boy on top of his tall horse. He rode with a marvelous loose certainty, falling into the rhythm of Big Jack's jarring trot. He was rapidly counting the group in front of him.

"Forty-five," he decided, "And all the colts. There are seven missing." We reined in a moment to stare up at the bleak ridges for the vagrants, and back over the pass. "Guess they're way back there on the other side of the divide," said Ted. "Somethin's grazin' there." He crossed the soft valley at a blundering canter, making for a clump of black specks half a mile or so away. Before he had gone two hundred yards he became a toy figure on a toy horse. The mountains on either side of him were twice their size. Ted and Big Jack disappeared.

Hegie and I rounded the horses into one bunch, and tried to hold them waiting for Ted. They had been running free for three days, and they were restless. They swayed back and forth across the valley as though they were moving to keep warm, they split at the stream and a dozen or so strayed up to higher ground. Wayward old Kate and her colt again exhibited the basis for suspecting their derivation from a mountain goat and headed straight up the steepest slope. Hegie yelled, waved his arms and made splattering reckless dashes after the wanderers. Forty-five uneasy horses, crowding, snapping and kicking. A bright sorrel gelding trotted about the edges of the bunch with springing steps. His eyes flared with excitement. Boob, lost from his beloved Kate, whickered pitifully as he nudged about searching for her. I found myself surrounded by their flying heads; their rumps pushed at my knee, and their breaths warmed my bridle hand. I was glad to have them near me. In this high rain-filled pass I had lost some of my self-confidence, and there was a reassurance in their vigour and in the heat of their steaming bodies. They filled the chill wet silence with the rattle of hoofs on the stony creek bed, with the thud of flank against flank and with cluttered snorts.

A shrill whoop announced Ted's return. He came alone.

shaping suddenly out of the mist. He was laughing, bending down over his horse's long ears. "Caribou," he called from a distance. "Thought they were horses. Seven of them too." He rode up to me and swung his leg over the bay's neck so that he sat sidewise, scanning the mountains inch by inch. The clouds were sliding lower and lower over the mountains. A long yodel from Hegie quivered down to us. He was across the valley scrambling up an almost perpendicular ridge on foot, dragging Baby Face at his heels. Above him were seven black specks against the remote bare wall. Hegie looked like a monkey. His elbows and knees shot out at rapid angles. Baby Face climbed with strong rabbit-like action of the hind quarters. The specks were not caribou this time. Hegie waved reassuringly at us.

We sent our bunch across some good firm ground at a full gallop. The horses ran eagerly. Redwing took the lead with beautiful ease, his small fine head thrust forward into the mist. Ted was sitting up on Big Jack's neck like a jockey. "Hey—aa. Hey—aa," he yelled. I could feel Prince galloping smoothly between my knees and the thin rain brushing by my ears. The grey dusk blew about us. The leaders plunged suddenly into the muskeg, and slowed to a walk in two steps. They piled into a jumble, and then of their own accord fell into single file, following the trail over the pass that we had made three days earlier. The trail made a wide U, doubling back across the valley. There they were strung out like a parade—the black horses, the bays, the pintos and the roans. In the dull light the sorrel gelding stood out like a flame, and Patches' white face gleamed as he tossed his neck. Their heads bobbed in unison. Their manes flagged in the wind. A strange pilgrimage in a cold gray waste, winding, serpentine, to a forgotten destiny.

Ted and I sat our horses on a small knoll, waiting for Hegie. Ted's warm round voice ceased in the middle of a line.

"Look," he pointed to the sky.

The night was descending *visibly*. It came down like a dark curtain falling from the roof of the sky, furling over the ragged peaks. I held my breath, watching the fringe come nearer and nearer my face. Rapidly it fell, without a sound. The soft luminous quality of the dusk snapped out like a dim electric light. The night was upon us. . . . Now the pass

became a mysterious void of blackness in which horses were only moving sounds. The mountains around us were overhanging shadows, the valley below, where the camp had been, was lost. I sat still, glad to feel Prince's heaving sides; and remembering, for the sake of companionship, Ted's face as I had seen it last—his wide blue eyes. Now it was only a pale blur, illumined for one flaring moment when he lit a match to see the time.

Above us, hoofs roared, and the stones trickled down from the ledges. Hegie's voice whooping at his horses. "Hey—aa. Hey—aa. Hey—aa." Seven swift bolts came down recklessly out of the dark heights. The shod hoofs struck sparks on the rocks. Hegie was on top of them, exulting in his daring. We began the long drive home.

There was nothing to do now but to let old Blue Robin take the lead and follow the trail back to camp, plowing through the night with lowered head. Nothing to do but watch for dodgers in the brush, wait for a wet branch in the face, and brace oneself against the sag of one's horse's knees when he fell into a hole. Nothing to do but crack lagging rumps with the ends of the reins, whoop at the lazy ones, chase the sly ones out of the brush onto the trail.

We were in the timber again. Ears were better guides than eyes to know the ground underfoot, the noises off the trail. We passed almost silently with our long procession, save for the chanting of the bell on Old Fox's neck. The horses' hoofs were muted in the moss. I could see only one horse ahead, but Ted's voice came back with startling clarity when he yelled at Maggie or Greenwood. Behind me Hegie was whistling his foreign tune, snapping his reins cheerfully. I was wet and cold and stiff, but I remembered the gallop back on the pass, the way the night had come upon us, the queer shapes the horses made scrambling up a ridge. I was content with these things alone.

The tawny flame of the cook fire picked Ted's face out of the darkness. We let the horses go, knowing they would not wander far before morning. Prince shook himself and drew in a long snuffling breath. The camp was asleep. We stood a moment watching the horses fall to grazing in the little opening. The bell on old Fox jangled more and more slowly. Hegie's teeth glistened. There was a warm blue smile in Ted's eyes. I put my hands into the firelight. The rain had stopped.

LAKE RHAZAMENE

PATTY WOOD

Here have your eyes held tears,
Flower-cupped—
Blue myrtles opening to rain.


Here have you forgotten years,
Lying limp with Beauty—
Passion fire-and-ice.

Here has your long pilgrimage,
Earthy trek over earth—
Come to sweet end.

Here came I, with heritage
Of earth—brought back the years
In heavy flood—dried your tears
Of ecstasy—forever took away
Your bright-happy day.

SPEAK-EASY NIGHTS

PRISCILLA FAIRCHILD

 HE scrubbed the red and white cotton table cover idly with her knuckles. The smoke in the little room sank heavily in her lungs until drawing a breath was so violent and inadequate a physical effort as to leave her unsatisfied. Ice settled noisily in the drinks, audible even over the roar of the room and the clatter of broken glass from the bar.

Allan leaned across the table, his eyes very large in the smoky light, strangely luminous, the color of a silver spoon in a cup of strong tea.

"You're very beautiful," he said, "and that is the most important thing. I don't care what you're like inside, I mean. Because you have an unusual line from the corner of your eye to the tip of your chin, I am content. Your possession or lack of other qualities matters not at all."

She shrugged her shoulders in a sudden violent gesture, an involuntary movement that crept out of some recess of her body and spread through her in a quickening momentum. "What about courage and integrity? What about feeling and 'keeping face' and one's own standards of perfection?"

"Oh," he said, with disgust, "You're drunk. Things like that are worn out, and you know it, certainly."

"You make me sick," she said dully, and stared at her finger nails in abstraction, while neither spoke for the time it took a chorus-girl with a banjo to wail for her mammy. Two soft shoe dancers emphasized their next words with a rhythmic patter that obsessed her mind.

"I think I'll go home," she murmured, but her brain throbbed to the rap-rap-patter of the dancing feet.

"You can't go home, it's still very early, and I won't take you."

"I'm going home," she said obstinately, but syncopation stumbled drunkenly throughout the room. Hypno-

tized she stared at his black tie and then down to his two pearl studs.

"I'm so very diga-diga-doo-by nature," screamed a negro girl, exemplifying her statement to the utmost.

Excitement, that steel spring, wound up taut inside of her. The muscles of her legs felt strong and supple as rubber. Her back flattened as her shoulders straightened and drew back. The feeling crept up to her mind, that swayed with the control of a snake's head raised to strike, glancing and lightning-quick. Alternately she was a concentric coil bound in upon herself, or a flash of invisible motion, sneering and contemptuous in rapidity.

She rose and gestured to Allan to dance. To her imagination the other dancers turned to the skeletons they would eventually become. Through the flesh of the negro girl she saw dry bones rubbing together. Eye-sockets peered at her from the corners of the room. A hand resting on the frame-work of a shoulder rattled a tattoo as she passed. Under the slamming music she heard the faint tap of fleshless feet beating the floor.

I am alive, she thought, and they are dead; but through the excitement a stiffness crept over her. She looked at her arms, expecting to see the flesh curl off the gleaming bones, and the lightness of her feet no longer surprised her, who knew to what brittle cages they were reduced. The flame of her body burned out, leaving that fever of the bones, that icy brilliance, which cold tons of deep sea water cannot quench, or damp mould riddled with earth-worms utterly smother.

This is no death, then, she thought, as the drum punctuated each word, this flame in the marrow, this transparency of the flesh. They are dead, long ago, who have forgotten the bone for the body, the hard for the soft. And she moved closer to Allan in the pattern of the dancing, and as his arm closed more tightly around her she laughed aloud to think of their two skeletons stepping so daintily, fastidiously.

As the music stopped the spring of her tension ran down. She moved heavily to the table, placing each foot with elaborate care. Her wrists ached, her body weighed her down, the line of her chin sagged under the pressure of her head. Marking out a diagram with a fore-finger on the

cloth, she stared sullenly at the table. Her lungs could scarcely lift the lead that oppressed them, and her shoulders sank forward as if under a burden.

"For God's sake say something," Allan said, "You look as if you'd seen a ghost."

"Not ghosts, but skeletons," she answered. "And there's nothing to say, or else I don't know how to say it."

She noticed his amazed look as vaguely as if curtains of grey fog hung between them. Ghosts and skeletons, and she was both. The fact of her reality grew to be impossible. If she could not speak to Allan, convince him of the importance of these things, so vital to her, did she exist at all? Had she become as nebulous as an unexpressed thought?

She neatly placed a cross in each square of the diagram with the end of a burned match.

"But Allan, you see—," she began, and stopped. What did he see? If she could not speak, did she, then, exist? If she did not exist, how could she possibly speak? Could he perceive her meaning if she failed to exist, through this agonizing incapacity for speech?

She saw herself a phantom, lacking in life, because the words beating in her brain disappeared before they reached her mouth. No agony or intensity on her part could force her feeling into expression, her thoughts into sentences. Her head felt filled with empty papers idly rattling about. She grasped at them but they fell to pieces, or proved blank, or were covered with a language whose secret she did not know. Sometimes in her ears she heard the beating of wings, whose significance travelled to her tongue, only to dissolve there, vaguely and incoherently.

"Nothing at all, it doesn't matter," she continued, as Allan put down his glass and stared at her, in a rather strange way, she thought. Perhaps she had been making odd faces, as people do when they hold council with themselves. Perhaps Allan thought she was mad, to gibber as she undoubtedly had been doing. Certainly she must be mad and this then was a dance in a mad-house!

The skeletons turned to maniacs forthwith, and she, in fancy, pulled about and modeled each face as if the features were made of putty, until it resembled a Daumier drawing. She set them swirling wildly as she completed in turn each pair that passed by the table. Their frenzy increased

with the violence of the music, and the revolving colored lights here touched up a nose to a livid blue, there changed a laugh to a toothy glare. She put her hand to her face, to feel if she herself had altered, and the lack of difference in the state of her features surprised her into an unconscious smile.

In astonishment she watched Allan's face contort itself, amazedly she noticed how the planes broke up and reformed into strange patterns, how odd lines appeared, and wrinkles. She realized with a little shock that he was smiling a response to her, and she became aware again of his presence, but with such a detachment that she placed him as far away as one of the outermost stars.

She made another try, "But Allan, there must be something more than just futility." As she said the words they bounced, hollow, in her head. Another voice, not hers, had surely uttered those incredibly unnatural syllables. They boomed endlessly along the ceiling, the orchestra could never drown them, not the concatenous collision of all the stars could erase them from her eardrums. She hurried on desperately, knowing that nothing but her own voice could give her even a pretense of help.

"I mean there's really something else." Why didn't someone stop her from letting these words slide limply out of her mouth? They kept on in an avalanche, meaningless, trite, overwhelming her. She saw his mouth twist at the corners, the sentences stringing helplessly along. Finally in an agony of foolishness, she arrived at a lame finish and sat in silence, one part of her brain scourging her, the other encouraging, until the conflict so tore at her nerves that with an exclamation she dragged on her coat and stumbled for the door. She looked around quickly, saw Allan slouched in the same position, his very shoulders curved mockingly, his hand tapping a cigarette on the ash-tray, then the coloured light slid off him, on to the dancers. With a deep breath she pushed at the handle and moved out into the street.

Over the powdery snow the lamps threw a net-work of patterns. Cool air slid down into her lungs, poured over her hot eye-lids and throat. She walked, her head a little bent, forgetting to think or worry, content in this imper-

sonal world of softly settling flakes. For blocks this daze held her, then finally she stopped and lifted up her chin.

"It's this, all this," she murmured half out loud, looking around. "Perhaps now that I've seen it again, something that goes on, and on, and doesn't change,—something that has an essence, an integral part that is always the same, and always renewed—I could explain it better."

A little later she sat opposite Allan across the red and white table-cloth. Though he scowled, his nostrils crinkled a little with amusement. Saying nothing he tapped the end of his cigarette, then looked at it for a while.

Silence suddenly made an opening into which she plunged. "Allan, you must see. Can't you see? It's so terribly important, not to lose that burning inside hardness, not to let it get soft."

She felt herself floundering helplessly. The words, the words evaded her. The snow outside—no, he would snort again, and again obstinately refuse to understand. The words choked and died in her throat, leaving her burning with anxiety and an inner passion of shame.


He rose as the orchestra brayed out its first note. Together they slid out on the oily rhythm of the music, whose beat forced their bodies to sway in unity, and their feet to move together.

"Happy?" he asked.

"Yes", she said, but avoided looking at his eyes and through the sockets into his skull, "very happy."

ONE MO' ROCK

MARY CHASE

EPHAS walked down the beach toward home, alone. Usually he made the trip with three or four of his friends, all in that pleasantly boisterous state which followed their Saturday evenings of craps and bad shine. Tonight, however, he had come from a changed town. A revival was in full swing and he and his friends had indulged in an orgy of repentance. Cephas remembered vaguely going up to the mourners' bench to sit there groaning, at intervals throwing his head back to howl, "Jesus, sa-ave a sinner."

Now that had all passed, and, except for a somewhat exalted feeling, he was the same as ever. He walked along slowly, playing his game with the waves—when they came in, he skirted them; when they went out, he followed them down the beach.

Then he noticed the moon. It was a thin one, leaning over on its back, just above the water. It made a pale, white path straight to him. "I wonder if that light is cool or hot, like the sun," he thought, and undressing hastily, he went splashing through the waves, toward the end of the light. It always kept just out of reach, however, so he swam until he was tired and then went back near the shore, to rest. He looked down—his body had disappeared entirely in the water. "When I move," he thought, "the blue light says I'm still there, but when I'm still, shark-sucker couldn't find me, no matter how hard he tried. Good thing to be a nigger, sharks don't like black meat."

He swam again, lazily. When he put his hands out in front of him the lights in the water made white cotton mittens for his hands. There was a blue path behind him, and all the fish left blue darting trails as they swam. It was all beautiful and cool. He began to sing a rough chant of the water and the blue trails, but the idea soon failed him and he fell back on "One mo' ro-ock, two mo' ro-ock," the

song he and his friends sang to the concrete-mixer when they worked on the roads.

"Time to go-o" at last wove itself into his song. He left the water slowly and unwillingly, and after he had dressed, played his game with the waves down the beach toward home, singing as he went, "One mo' ro-ock—"


MUSEUM PORTRAIT

BARBARA D. SIMISON

Above, they hung her portrait, newly oiled,
And done with Ingres minuteness; every hair
In place, with that sleek look for which she toiled,
Because it was the fashion then to wear
It parted so; perhaps, it was because
Her husband told her to, and she felt she
Must purse her lips to wait for his applause,
On having her accord with his decree.
Below, they placed the things that she liked best—
A comb just worn at night when she sat all
Alone—a bit of lace upon her breast;
The jewelled fan beside her Spanish shawl.
So here, she was as she would like to seem
And there, as time and he would rather dream!

DANCING SCHOOL

GEORGIA STAMM

AYBELLE, walking to dancing school with her older sister, felt excited and frightened both at once. Her heart was thumping violently, uncomfortably. She carried a brown velvet bag, holding her dancing slippers, by its drawstring, and it banged against her legs with each step she took. Thump! Thump! went her heart. Bang! Bang! went the bag against her legs. She was thinking feverishly, "Suppose no one should dance with me! Suppose I should be the only one left out, and have to sit through a dance all alone! Or have to dance with Miss Evans! What on earth shall I say to a boy if one does dance with me? O heaven help me!" Turning to her sister, she said in a desperate, breathless tone, "What on earth do you say to a boy?" "Oh goodness, I don't know," said her sister impatiently, for she was annoyed at having to take Maybelle to dancing school, "Just anything that comes into your head." "But just what do you say?" persisted Maybelle, frantically pressing. Her sister was spared an answer by their arrival at the dancing school. Maybelle was now struck dumb with terror.

They climbed the steps to the doorway. A boy was climbing the steps too. He held the door open for them. Maybelle looked at him. Why, she knew him! He was in her class at school, and his name was Charlie Wilson. Not that she had ever spoken to him or he to her. The boys never paid any attention to the girls and the girls ignored the boys. Still it was cheering to see a familiar face and he looked half smiling as he held the door open, as if he recognized her. She went in feeling more excited than ever. An awkward arrangement of the rooms made it necessary for her to pass through the boys' waiting room to get to the girls'. The room was lined with boys putting on white gloves and black patent leather shoes. She passed through the black and white ranks with eyes cast down, and thought in agony that she heard a titter go round the room. In the girls' dressing room, sashes and hair ribbons were being tied, button-hooks wielded, hair brushed by mat-

ter of fact governesses and fluttering mothers. The girls were dressed like Maybelle, in white muslin and lace over pink or blue silk slips, with pink or blue sashes and hair-ribbons.

Maybelle changed hurriedly into her black pumps, gave her hat, coat, and brown-velvet bag to the cynical, bored-looking hat-check girl, and began pulling on her long, white, silk gloves. She saw a girl that she knew, whose mother was helping her get ready. Maybelle never liked Lucretia but today she went over and spoke to her. "I just love dancing-school, don't you?" said Lucretia in her silly voice while her anxious, attendant mother was brushing her long, brown curls. "Oh, yes," replied Maybelle, trying to make her voice sound natural, unscared. She turned to the mirror, and puffed up her blue hair-ribbon, perched on the side of her head, and wished that her hair was not short and straight.

Maybelle and Lucretia together went up the red-carpeted stairs to the ballroom to make their curtsy to Miss Evans. Miss Evans was very tall with black hair. She was wearing a beautiful sparkly green dress, and she was saying "Take hold of your skirts! Take one step to the right! Left leg behind! Bend and straighten!" Maybelle coming up from her rather wabby curtsy, noted the great length of the big room. At the left was the piano. At the right, lining the wall were chairs; a long uninterrupted black line that was the boys, abruptly changing into a longer pink and blue line that was the girls. Maybelle and Lucretia joined the pinks and blues.

Miss Evans now stepped to the center of the ballroom, clicked her castanets, and said, "Take partners for the march!" The black line stood up, advanced waveringly, then broke up as each boy bowed before a girl with right hand on hip, left hand on stomach. A very small boy bowed in front of Maybelle. She noted with distaste that he was half a head shorter than she, and looked somewhat like a rabbit. The couples marched round the room, then formed in rows for the Delsarte exercises. "Point the right foot! Point to the side! Extend the arms sideways! Right foot back! The right foot, William! Hands above the head! Feet together! Arms down slowly, slowly!" said Miss Evans.

Maybelle tried to imitate Miss Evans' graceful fingers that rained down from her wrists when she held them above

her head. Miss Evans' fingers seemed to float through the air as her arms came slowly down to her sides. How silly and awkward the boys looked when they did these exercises. They didn't point their feet, they stuck them forward as if they were about to kick a soccer-ball. They held their hands in fists above their heads, and the bad ones refused to do the exercises at all. "What stupid things boys are," thought Maybelle, "They don't even know their right from their left."

"Click-click" went Miss Evans' castanets. "Take partners for the one-step!" Here was the little boy bowing to Maybelle again, hand on hip, other hand on stomach. Oh, how awfully he danced. He never looked where he was going, and bumped her into people. He made his left hand, holding her right, go up and down, up and down. When the music stopped, Maybelle was glad to sit down. Miss Evans was talking. "Gentlemen, sit to the left of your partners. Click-click! Don't leave your partners, boys. Go back there, Thomas and William. No, you don't need any water so soon! Sit to the left, remember! Young ladies and gentlemen, please do not cross your legs! Nothing looks worse! However, you may cross your feet at the ankles." With a subdued tittering, the pupils uncrossed their legs, and sat uncomfortably erect.

Next came a lesson in the waltz. Maybelle caught it very quickly. After each slide, you began with a different foot, and made a sort of square. The boys, Maybelle noticed with scorn, had great difficulty learning it. They would start all right, fumble with their feet and go all wrong. Miss Evans (who could not say her th's) counted, "One! Two! Shree! One! Two! Shree!"

"Click-click!" "Take partners for the waltz." Boys were bowing left and right. Maybelle, trying to seem unconscious and uncaring, talked to Lucretia whose eye was wandering. A boy bowed to Lucretia. Maybelle and two other girls were left out. "You two," said Miss Evans, "dance together. Maybelle will dance with me." Maybelle, blushing hotly, tried furiously to follow Miss Evans who counted, "One! Two! Shree! One! Two! Shree! all through the dance without ceasing.

Gladly Maybelle sat down after it was over next to a group of girls whose partners had deserted them, escaping Miss Evans' watchful eye. Lucretia, also deserted, came over and sat in the chair next to Maybelle. As she sat down, "Rip"

went her dress. The bad boys had stuck a pin on her chair and now they were sniggering at her plight. "How nasty boys are!" said Maybelle. "That's their idea of something funny!"

"Click-click!" "Take partners for the polka!" Maybelle felt a dreadful, sinking feeling. Oh, if only one of those horrid, horrid boys would ask her to dance. A boy stepped in front of her. He bowed. She saw the top of his blonde head, and then as he straightened she recognized the pink face of Charlie Wilson. She got up and made her curtsy. Away they went to the polka step:—slide—slide, hop, hop, hop! "One! Two! One, two, three!"

"I like the polka, don't you?" said Maybelle. "Yep, it's got so much go to it!" agreed Charlie. "Say," he said, "Don't you think Miss Grout is a funny old girl?" Miss Grout was their school teacher. "She's a nut!" said Maybelle, delighted that they should agree again. "Say," he went on "D'jever hear the joke: why is a Ford car like a schoolroom?" "No," said Maybelle. "Why?" "Cause there's an old crank in front and a lotta little nuts behind!" Maybelle giggled furiously. She thought it the funniest joke she had ever heard. "How old are you?" she asked, thinking how easy it was to talk to this boy. "Twelve. How old are you?" "Eleven," she said and thought how nice it was that he was a year older. "Let's get some water," he said, after the strenuous polka was over. "Whew, it's Hot!" Gallantly he pushed the other boys right and left from the ice-water pitcher, got her water for her, in a paper cup, and presented it to her with a flourish.

Take partners for the Paul Jones! Charlie gulped down his water, put a masterful arm round Maybelle and danced off with her. Maybelle giggled admiringly as she pointed out to him that he had omitted his bow. "What would you've done if Miss Evans had caught you?" she asked. He shrugged his shoulders and said, "Well, she didn't catch me, did she?"

"Click-click!" The music stopped. "Face your partner! Girl's right hand in boy's left! Start forward!" "Goodbye!" said Charlie, and did he? Yes, he did squeeze her hand before he let it go and passed on! Left hand, right hand, tall boy, short boy, boy with glasses, ugly boy, left hand, right hand. "Click-click!" The music stopped. Oh heavens! Maybelle had to dance with the oldest, tallest, handsomest boy in the room. How he scared her, he was so old and contemptuous looking! They began to dance and she stumbled a little. "Oh, excuse

me!" she cried. "My fault," said he politely. "Oh, it isn't your fault and you know it!" thought Maybelle ungratefully. She was uncomfortable, nervous; she could think of nothing to say to him. They danced past Maybelle's sister who was sitting on the sidelines among the governesses and mothers. Her sister was trying to say something to her; her lips were forming the word, "Talk!" Talk!—Maybelle could not say a word. She felt as if she would never speak again. In silence they danced. In profound silence they sat down together, he on her left.

With what enormous thankfulness did she see Charlie Wilson's pink face bob up and down in front of her in a bow as he asked her for the next dance. He did not chatter as gayly during this dance as in the one before, but the silence that fell between them was not in the least strained or agonized. Yet Charlie was not altogether his former cheerful, easy self, he seemed preoccupied, a little absent. Suddenly he said in a hurried, embarrassed tone, "May I take you home from dancing-school?" Maybelle's heart leaped at this thrilling, this glorious offer. A boy asking to take her home! But her high heart sank as she dismally realized that she must refuse, that her sister was sitting there, waiting to take her home. She would have to confess to this boy that she was a child that had to be called for. She would have to tell, disclose to him what an infant she was, and he would no longer think of her, or want to take home a girl so babyish. Humiliated, anguished, she made her reply, more abrupt than she realized. "No you can't! My sister's here for me." "Oh, I see," he said in what seemed to her a curt tone. She said to herself in despair, "I suppose he thinks I'm just a little kid."

"Maybelle!" It was Miss Evans' sharp voice. "Maybelle, please turn your toes out!" What an awful thing! How cruel of her to say that just then! How humiliating! Oh, I've lost him forever! thought Maybelle, acutely unhappy.

"Young ladies and gentlemen," said Miss Evans when they were all seated. "I want you to change partners after every dance. I don't want you to go on dancing with the same partner all the time. Now then, take partners, please!" Charlie left Maybelle. "Forever!" she thought drearily and the small rabbit-looking boy whom she first danced with bowed before her.

How miserable she was! Why did she have to lose Char-

lie! Perhaps he might dance with her again! No, he never would! And here she was dancing with this nasty little fellow who kept bumping her into people. What was he saying to her? That he had gotten A. A. A. on his report card that month. Charlie had told her with great glee that he had gotten B, C, D for attendance, work and conduct in order. It was sissy for a boy to be good at his lessons. All the real boys were terrible in them.

The little boy was saying to her now, "Don't let's pay any attention to Miss Evans but let's dance the next together too." "Oh horrors!" she thought, "I don't want to dance with him!" But fear that she would again be left out caused her to accept. Just as she stood up to make her curtsy she noticed Charlie's blonde hair and pink face coming in her direction. In despair she saw him suddenly turn and bow to Lucretia.


Miserable, with a big unswallowable lump in her throat, she went through the last dance with the brilliant student. She was to glad to hear the music of the Polonaise which apparently meant the Grand March and the end. Round the room marched the couples, hand in hand, girl's left hand holding skirts, boy's right hand on hip. "Take shree steps, then sweep the foot along the floor and up! One! Two! Shree! Brush! One! Two! Shree! Brush!" Curtsy to Miss Evans! Curtsy to your partner! Dismissed!

Sick at heart, Maybelle stumbled down the red-carpeted stairs, bumped by the hurrying hordes of the released boys who bounded down three steps at a time. In the dressing-room, dejectedly, she changed her shoes, put on her hat and coat. "Are you all ready? Let's go!" said her sister. They passed through the boys' now noisy room, dodging a flying patent leather shoe. To her sister's question, "Did you have a good time?" she could make no answer.

A boy was standing by the street door as if waiting for some one, with his hands in his pockets. It was Charlie Wilson! Maybelle's heart stood still, then went on beating very fast. As she passed him, he closed one merry blue eye in a broad wink. He'd winked at her! Then he wasn't mad! He still liked her! How happy she was! How thrilling! That wink! She would never forget it! She was tired but she didn't care. She had been scared, unhappy, wretched, but now everything was joyous. Joyfully her brown velvet bag banged against her legs to the tune of her happy thoughts. "He *winked* at me! He *winked* at me!"

TEMPERATURE ALMOST NORMAL

RACHEL GRANT

T was tedious to be lying in bed now that the fever no longer burned heavily through her body, gnawing at the edges of her eyes. It made one feel stupidly small and childish. The distance to where her feet sloped up in little pyramids was too short, unprepossessing, the shape of her body thickened and blurred by the bedclothes. Pet-tishly she pulled them taut to her chin and stretched full length; that was worse, she looked like a long block of stone. Tired, she let them go, and a magazine beside her, slipping like a lizard between the bed and the wall, dropped on the floor. It annoyed her to feel young, not in control. Even her hands betrayed her, lying there on the coverlid, a little on one side, curled, fingertips under. They looked young and uncertain. She lifted them and examined them carefully. She was proud of her hands, the long, chiselled fingers were beautiful and she had taught them to interpret her silences. They moved restlessly as she talked, touching her face, resting against her hair and always stretched a little separate, as if to emphasize her pleasure in them. But now the nails were lustreless and too long; she turned on one side and put both hands under the pillow.

The room was so still, inert. The furniture was passive as though no one had ever walked by it or moved it. When she was up and using things they never seemed so unalive. She thought the writing desk stood heavy against the wall, and yet she knew how it lightly shifted position when she pulled at the drawer. The portfolio on top lay close, close, as though no fingers could pry it loose. The perfume bottles were onyx and jade, and riveted as ornaments to the top of her dressing-table; the rug was a sheet of dull red metal on the floor. Everything was unmoving and immovable. The spring flowers were rigid in their vase. She saw the thick, translucent stems of tulips, swollen in the green water, and shuddered; she hated thick things. Suddenly she wondered if she, too, had lost all power to move. She sat up sharply, her heart shivering. Then

with an uneasy laugh, she slid back again, turned the pillow over and lay still.

She shut her eyes, tired as they were of moving up and down the edges of the furniture, through the small brass drawer handles, and along the sun lines on the floor. She tried to visualize herself serving tea in the library downstairs, as she so liked to do, hands outstretched above the silver things on the tray, people coming up to her, talking, listening, liking her. But it was too difficult, she was inescapably here, in bed, and quite alone. She could not accustom herself to being ill, and she had no patience. Solitude was something one chose, not something to be forced upon one like this, and silence had more dignity than this soundless vacuum in which they had left her. People seemed so remote. They had sent flowers, but it was such a usual gesture to send flowers, so mechanical. Perhaps this pot of fuchsia which had pleased her so had been ordered by his secretary, over the telephone, without any conscious thought of her. It seemed to her terribly sad that she should have been tricked into gratitude. Tears stood in her eyes,—she opened them hurriedly, aghast at this childishness. She must stop thinking about herself. Without interest, she began to hunt words, describing things, her curtains, fluted like bronze columns; the group of perfume boxes, uneven, cubistic, a diminutive New York sky-line. Words were too heavy, her mind sagged under them.

All at once she became aware of the bed. It pressed into her back and the sheets strained across her chest. She broke free of them, and on one elbow, struggled to pull the bedclothes straight and to smooth the under sheet. She suffered as it knotted in folds that seemed to urge themselves into her back, and the sheets strained across her chest. She suffered as it knotted in folds that seemed to urge themselves into her body, granite, terribly hard. Exhausted and damp with sweat, she lay down and felt the cover bend like steel around her ankles. She writhed, the mattress was wooden, corrugated. She drew herself convulsively into a crouching position near the head of the bed, watching the blankets sliding in a malignant slant towards the floor,—

"Two degrees more," said the nurse," that seems strange, after you have been lying here placidly all afternoon."

WINTER MOON

MARION BUSSANG

Oh cold young moon,
The brittle lover
Of sloped slate roofs,
Of chiselled towers:
We who have worshipped
Summer and flowers
Penitent kneel
Under your scorn;
Steel and silver
Welded by heat,
Hardened by fire,
We, born
Out of the warm
Sweet womb of June
Ask that no more
May we know of desire;
Only the clear
Swift pain of the sword
That is all beauty,
Swift in its passing.

TEN DOLLARS

ELIZABETH WHEELER

CLINK! Nine dollars! The figures leapt at Peter, startlingly black and large. He picked up the bank and shook it; the coins shifted as if they had not much room to move. Only a dollar more. Then the bank would open, and then—he could buy all the soldiers he wanted, Germans, French, British and Americans; infantry, cavalry, artillery; machine-guns, tanks and airplanes. In another week perhaps, if he worked very hard.

He set the bank on the bookcase, and picked up the overflowing wastebasket. His mother's was only half full, so into that he dumped the contents of his sister's and the one in the guestroom, and then went to the cellar to empty them. His father's wastebasket in the study had to be taken by itself, it was so big and so full, though less full now than in school time. However, it served the purpose of carrying up the fire-wood. Peter threw the logs into the woodbox, rattled the kindling on top, and swept the hearth in three quick strokes. Six more days and he would have another twenty-five cents. He swept the front porch, already so hot that he could feel the warmth through his rubber soles. The trees along the drive scarcely stirred, and there was a haze over the sea, blotting out the horizon line.

With this heat, the beans would be ready in his garden, and his mother had said she would buy them from him. Basket in hand, he walked quickly through the rose garden where a hummingbird was flying, across the road, and into the field beyond. Two years ago it had been a hay-field; now it was planted to crops to feed the school in the coming winter. Across the upper part, near the road, marched rows of young corn like soldiers in platoons. Below, among the white-dotted green ranks of flowering potatoes, khaki-clad figures with hoes moved up and down. Since they could not go to war, the school boys had come back in squads to work in the fields.

With his basket fixed on his head like a helmet, Peter advanced upon them.

"Hello, Peter. Going to help us hoe potatoes?"

"No. My beans ought be ripe by now. I'm gointa sell 'em. Guess how much money I got?"

"How much?"

"Aw c'm on and guess."

"Oh, I don't know. Two dollars and a quarter?"

"Nope. Much more 'n that."

"You tell us. We can't guess."

Peter kicked at a dead weed with scornful impatience. Then he condescended. "Nine dollars. When I get ten, I can spend it, and I'm going to get lots of soldiers and have a battle."

"That'll be fun, won't it?"

Peter looked at the bent back of the speaker, and sighed, then moved on down the field to his own garden. The boys did not seem much interested in his soldiers. He thought of Mac, who had hoed potatoes last summer while he was picking beans, and had talked to him across the field as they worked. In the fall, instead of coming back to school, Mac had joined the Marines and gone to France. School had not been the same without him. He had been football captain, and could pass a ball further than anyone else in school, and had taught Peter how to drop-kick, also how to tackle, and a great many more things too numerous to be recalled. Peter missed Mac. He wished that Mac were there to hear about his soldiers.

But thinking of his soldiers made picking beans easy, even in this heat. Quickly he hitched along on his knees, feeling under the dusty leaves. The basket filled rapidly. Some of them were long and curved, like nothing else but beans; some were short and stumpy, like zeppelins, only thinner. Peter dug his hands into the basket and wiggled his fingers about. Nearly two quarts. He stood up and, thrusting his hands in his pockets, surveyed his garden. Two rows of beans, then a row of carrots, one of beets, two of lettuce, and the last row of radishes because Mummy liked them. The lettuce looked wilted; he would have to water them when the sun went down. Otherwise, the garden looked fine. Suddenly his eye caught sight of a bright orange something with black dots on one of the beet plants. He leapt over the carrots in time to see a huge potato bug parade across a leaf and disappear underneath. Peter grabbed him and put him down

in the path. Then he selected a blunt stone, and standing a little way off, dispatched the potato bug with the sure aim of a grenadier. In satisfaction, he began to whistle "Over There," and picking up his basket of beans, he strode up the field to deliver them and claim his wages.

The next day he sold some carrots, and the day after that some beets. The bank now registered nine dollars and seventy-five cents. Saturday, when his father paid him, he would have ten. On Friday, however, a sudden fear assailed him that someone else might have bought his soldiers, so he begged permission to go to town and see if they were still there. He walked up to the window with his eyes averted, and he closed them before he dared to look. Yes, there they were, the whole window filled with them. On one side a whole army of Germans in steel-pointed helmets marched forward with bayonets set, led by a man that must be the Kaiser on a black war-horse. On the other side, rank upon rank, stood poilus, Tommies and doughboys; and in between were tanks and guns and a few dead soldiers. For one short hour, Peter examined them separately and all together, and then, with a sigh that clouded the window, he tore himself away, his eyes blinking and the end of his nose white and flat. To-morrow they would all be his.

When he got home, as always he looked hopefully on the front hall table for mail, and could hardly believe his eyes when he saw a postcard addressed to him. It was from Mac. The picture was a colored one of a French soldier and an American shaking hands. The American was labelled "Mac" but he did not look much like him. Peter turned the card over, and sat down on the stairs to read it. It took quite a while. "Dear Peter:—Wait till you see the German helmet I found for you yesterday. In a month now, you will be putting them over from the thirty-yard-line. Wish I could see you. Mac." Peter sat still for several minutes, looking first at the picture and then at the writing. Abruptly he jumped up, slipping the card into the pocket of his shirt. After fumbling about in the darkness of the hall closet, he emerged with a football. The screen door banged behind him as he landed with a flying leap on the lawn. Back and forth, from the lilac hedge to the horsechestnut tree, he drop-kicked the football, running tirelessly after it. The shadows of the spruce trees crept toward the house, and the sun slipped behind the hill;

but still Peter kicked, straining to make each go further than the last. Once he put one from the hedge over the tree into the drive. Mac would have said, "Atta Boy! Come on now. Do it again." So Peter tried, until it was dusk and the robins chirped good-night through the gathering fog.

That evening after supper as his father unfolded the Times, Peter said triumphantly, "Daddy, you owe me a quarter to-morrow. Then I can open my bank!" He turned a somersault that knocked over the fire tongs. Peter hastened to pick them up, but the expected reprimand did not come. Instead, his father fished in his pocket.

"If you'll keep quiet, I'll give it to you now," and he tossed the quarter to Peter. In half a minute, Peter was upstairs and down again with his bank. He jammed the quarter in the slot, and as the nine-seventy-five changed to ten-aught-aught, there was a strange click. Peter pressed the spring in the bottom. It opened, and out poured nickles, dimes and quarters in a jingling heap. He shook the bank until there was nothing left in it, and then picked up the coins in both hands, letting them slip through his fingers like sand. Then he separated them into piles—nickles, dimes and quarters—stacked them neatly, and counted them, then multiplied and added to see if they made ten dollars. They did, so he set them out in platoons with the nickels and dimes for privates, because there were more of them, and the quarters for officers. The platoons moved about and formed in diminutive companies. The nickles were the Allies and their officers were heads up; the dimes were the Germans, their officers tails up.

The battle was so exciting that Peter hardly heard the telephone ring except to know that his father had gone to answer it. He did not hear what was being said, nor notice that his mother and his sister had put down their books. But when his father came back and stood still in the door, Peter looked up.

"Mac's been killed." He spoke so quietly that Peter could not believe what he had said until he heard his mother say "Oh, John!" in the voice that always meant something terrible had happened. Peter looked down at the coins and stared hard at one of the quarters.

The Morris chair creaked as his father sank heavily into it. "Poor old Mac. I've been waiting every day to hear this."

The eagle on the quarter disappeared and the quarter

became a white blur on the rug. Peter got up, and dragged his feet slowly after him up the stairs. His door closed softly.

The next morning he came downstairs before anyone else. His money was in an old candy box on the table. He picked up some of the coins and let them drop back into the box one by one, holding the last quarter, looking at the eagle, and finally letting it too fall. As he heard his mother's step on the stairs, he carefully put the cover on the box and turning his back upon it, walked into the dining-room with his eyes on the pattern in the rug. His mother had gone into the kitchen. He looked out of the window at a robin strutting on the lawn, nor did he turn when the door swung behind him.

"Mummy, the Red Cross still wants money doesn't it?"


"Yes, dear, they can always use it."

"Well, then, I guess—I want to give them—my ten dollars."

Although he could not die like Mac, perhaps he could help the Allies too. But now he could not have his soldiers. And Mac was dead. Suddenly Peter dropped his head on his arm against the window-sash, and sobbed.

CONCERNING MEANS OF LOCOMOTION

ELIZABETH PERKINS

 COMMON generalization maintains that every novice who gains admission to the sacred precincts of Higher Education believes that her purpose embodies the acquisition of one of three assets: Learning, friends, amusement. The novice almost immediately discovers that while her purpose may remain fixed, she is being forced to direct her energies not immediately towards its attainment, but towards getting from one to another of the places where learning, companionship or amusement is to be found. This fact is less commonly recognized than the first, but is no less widely applicable; and while the mind of Napoleon may have planned his most successful strategies in total repudiation of whatever agonies the stomach of Napoleon was suffering, smaller brains are easily distracted from important considerations by even so slight a matter as a pair of weary supports. Consequently an appreciable amount of concentrated thought is spent each year upon means of locomotion.

The automobile, worthy vehicle never before fully appreciated, being forbidden to all save a select few, the field is narrowed to an examination of three contrivances: the foot, the roller-skate, and the bicycle. These are similar in that all three use overmuch foot- and leg-muscle and thereby revive the old grievance against parents who, fearing lest the purity and Scriptural accuracy of their pedigree be questioned, refuse to instruct offspring in the impartial use of hands and feet. Aside from this feature, they differ widely and are deserving of separate consideration.

The foot as a rule comes as part of one's standard equipment; it is therefore convenient, its use is naturally and easily acquired, and it is always within call. Practically no knowledge of its mechanism is necessary for the amateur, and there is no danger of forgetting the key. In a state of nature its upkeep also is negligible; unfortunately the deteriorating influence of civilization has been such that shoes are now con-

sidered advisable and even necessary by the decadent daughters of *Pithecanthropus Erectus*. Quite aside from the expense of constantly replacing a succession of broken-down shoes, this state of affairs has brought it about that any unusual exertion produces great wear and tear on the foot itself. Blisters on one's feet are no less unattractive than worn leather or tire-punctures; and they are distinctly more painful. It is this personal element in the relation between foot and owner which has made walking less popular than its manifold advantages might lead one to expect.


Upon the roller-skate I gaze with a frankly jaundiced eye. There is to me an underlying faithlessness, a treachery, in roller-skates to which I shall never become reconciled. Perhaps our many unfortunate experiences have been due wholly to my own lack of understanding; but I can swear to having seen what on the lips of a person would be a malicious sneer gleam about the clamps of a rollerskate as it relinquished its grasp at the crucial moment and deposited me, at grazing incidence, upon the pavement. On the few occasions when I have been allowed to retain the upright posture, I have found the quality of self-control to be quite lacking in the skate; however slight the incline on which I embark, an appeal to a courteous tree has always been necessary in order to prevent a continuance of the mad course and an inglorious end in the shrubbery at the bottom. Moreover, the roller-skate is constricting to the ankle; it produces a most harsh and unesthetic effect upon any but the smoothest cement; and it transmits up the spine a series of uneven vibrations which cannot but be injurious to the delicate nerve-centers of the brain.

The bicycle, on the other hand, is a thoroughbred. Offering a striking contrast to the blunted perceptions and purblind cruelty of the roller-skate, it is affectionate, sensitive and high-strung. Quick-tempered it may be, as is shown by its behavior when forced to move at a pace at variance with its own inclinations; and he who would master it must possess, in addition to a certain technical skill, hands of tempered steel, prehensile toes, and an intuitive quickness of discernment. Like all fine creations, it requires of its owner intelligence and constant care; but these it repays a thousandfold. Mastership, once attained, has no equal among all the sensations to which man is susceptible. But all approaches to perfection are, by their very conspicuousness, doomed to

frustration. Something in nature is aroused to antagonism against this challenger of its powers; for at the approach of the humblest pedestrian, hills are at worst quiescent; before automobiles they are seen to abase themselves; while in the presence of a bicycle they rise indignantly on end. Unless a system of elevators be installed in the country roads of the land. I seriously consider growing a good set of callouses and reverting to feet.

A LEGEND OF OLD RUSSIA

PAULINE SLOM

HE "Malach Ha Moveth"—the Angel of Death—was somewhat tired of his abode in heaven. For eons he had inhabited the same dwelling and had carried on the same work which made him so feared on earth. Notwithstanding the respectful awe his fellow-angels accorded him, his present life was somber and monotonous. Now the Malach had an idea that a wife might break this monotony. Wherefore he petitioned the Most High for a vacation and his petition was granted.

Thus it happened that the Angel of Death descended to the earth and assumed the guise of a mortal and the humble name of Yankel. But within a fortnight came Yankel's downfall. He met a young lady in the village. As she stood there in her high laced pointed shoes, gathered skirt, tight-bodiced waist and multi-colored head shawl of the middle class girl of that period, she seemed a vision of loveliness to the dazzled Yankel. It was not so much beauty of feature as an unusual flashing air of independence that captivated him. He made inquiries and learned that she was by name Alte, daughter of one Ben-Yomin, a shoemaker.

Time and courtship sped by quickly. Within four months there was a great commotion in the home of Ben-Yomen. In one room a white-gowned Alte sat on an inverted wash tub. All the married women in the village were combing and braiding her hair. Then other people entered and each one undid a little of the "tzop" or braid. Aha! At last the secret was out! This could mean nothing other than a wedding.

And true enough, for there in the next room rose the "chupeh" or wedding canopy. At the other side of the room stood a dazed, beatific Yankel. In his blissful ecstasy, his one wonder was that some "bocher" had not snatched his treasure up long ago. Then, amid a maze of happiness, he was wed.

Before many months had passed poor Yankel understood why this wife of his had not been besought by the vil-

lage benedicts. For she was known as "Alte de Mook"—"Alte the Vixen." She was a shrew of first water. All day long she nagged and nagged. It was "Yankel, be careful, don't soil my clean sanded floor," "Yankel, go to the porotz for this," "Yankel, you made a mess of that last business deal," "Yankel" this, and "Yankel" that.

Poor Yankel awoke from his rosy dream. Then he determined to declare himself master. After all, was he not the Angel of Death? Surely he could control a mere mortal shrew. At first her husband's unexpected stand silenced Alte, but not for long. It was impossible to quell her and she soon wore down his resistance. And so, year after year, her incessant nagging continued until he could endure no more. He decided to return to heaven.

Now the reason he had not returned long before was his love—not for his wife, but for his son Mosche. He had hated to leave the youngster to fight his way in the world unaided. But now the boy was nineteen and, with his father's help, old enough to make his way in the world. Therefore the angel summoned his son to him, revealed his true self, and added, "I am not leaving you without the means of livelihood, so listen carefully to me. You must become a doctor. Yes, yes, I know you have never studied medicine",—as the astounded boy tried to interrupt—"but that will not matter. If, when you enter a sick room, you see me standing at the foot of the patient's bed, you will know that the patient will live. You may reassure his family and prescribe anything you wish—the patient will recover. But should I be standing at the patient's head, then it will be useless to try remedies. Say at once nothing can be done and predict death. And now, my son, one last farewell."—and with the joyful thought of his renewed bachelordom the Angel of Death soared to the kinglly realms above.

The years passed, as years do pass. To the Angel of Death, his experience on the earth had become a vague, unpleasant dream; the only reminder of it was his frequent meetings with his son. Alte in the meantime had become a scolding, chattering, sharp-faced old woman cared for by her son.

As for Mosche—ah, his was now a name renowned throughout the Russian kingdom. His fame had grown from a mere whisper of a man who never failed in his diagnoses, to

a thundering acclaim as one of the greatest doctors in Europe. If he said, "Madam, your son will recover," the mother would cease worrying, no matter what others might say. But if he said the patient was doomed——.

However, his profession did not occupy all his thoughts. Hopeless love also possessed him. For at a brilliant court function he had met and lost his heart to the youngest daughter of the czar! Moreover, he had reason to believe that he, too, had found favor in her eyes. But realizing the emptiness of his aspirations, he had never breathed a word of his affections.

One night as he was attending a medical case in Riga, he received an urgent summons to the imperial palace in Moscow. The czar's youngest daughter was dying, all other physicians had given up hope, and the czar was frantic in his grief. With the utmost haste Mosche set forth. His mind was consumed with terrible anxiety. Where would his father be standing? If at the foot, then all would be well and good. But what if he should be standing at the head! He turned cold with the horror of the thought. No! It could not be that she would die! Why, ten days ago she had been so blooming, so full of life. If at the foot, then all well and good. But what if he should be standing at the head. Again and again the horrible thought throbbed through his brain—suppose his father were standing at her head, suppose his father were standing at her head, suppose his father—thus passed the journey.

In the lower hall of the palace he came face to face with the czar himself, who with tears streaming down his usually dignified face, said, "My boy, if you will only save her I will grant you anything you ask—even my daughter herself!" With this astounding promise he rushed him to the princess' room. As Mosche crossed the threshold he closed his eyes. How could he look? But he must face the situation. With a start he opened his eyes. His worst fears were confirmed! There at the head of the richly canopied bed stood the Angel of Death, grim and foreboding!

For one endless moment Mosche remained motionless; then he shook off the paralysis which had seized him. There must still be a way to save her! Agitatedly he cleared the room of bystanders. He must work quickly—it was evident she was sinking fast. At last he turned and faced his father. "Father, won't you go away? For my sake, father. I beg of

you." For many precious minutes he pleaded in an agony of anxiety, but the angel only shook his head inexorably. "I'm sorry, but I must do my duty."

Mosche fell back, hopelessly despondent. Then—no, he wouldn't let her die; he wouldn't. He rushed forward shouting, "Father, you must go away. I'll make you—" and then the inspiration came to him.

"For the last time, will you leave?" he asked excitedly. The princess was almost dead. "You won't, eh? Well then, I'll bring my mother! Do you remember?" The Angel of Death seemed to shrivel—gone were his majesty, his proud and kingly bearing. He was about to collapse; he thought he heard a shrill voice cry, "Yankel!"

Then he gathered his waning strength and with one mighty bound was gone, just before the last breath of life was about to leave the princess.

As you may know, the princess recovered and married Mosche, who at once gave up the medical profession. As the princess was in no way like her mother-in-law, their wedded life was long and happy.

As for Alte, it is known that she lived to an astounding old age—just as if, her neighbors used to say, even the Angel of Death didn't want her and deferred her coming as long as he possibly could.



BOOK REVIEWS



KEATS'S SHAKESPEARE

CAROLINE F. E. SPURGEON Oxford University Press 1928

Week-end visits in the country are in general somewhat similar. We ask of them entertainment merely. In the discovery of a startling, fine-cut face, or an unexpected attitude of mind we are fortunate beyond calculation. Probably Miss Spurgeon's hopes were not more extravagant on the day she left New York City last October; certainly she had no presentiment of that conversation with another guest which led to one of the most important discoveries in the literary field for many years. As Miss Spurgeon describes it, this guest, "hearing that I was interested in such things, asked me rather tentatively whether I would care to look at a copy of Shakespeare which had some marks in it by Keats, and which belonged to a friend of hers who lived at Princeton." And so it was by chance that Miss Spurgeon heard of the existence in Mr. George Armour's library of those books of Keats's which had grown into the fibre of his life, which in a sense were *his* as were no others that he owned. Keats's own Shakespeare, "seven rather shabby . . . stocky . . . and attractive little volumes," stood quietly on these shelves for nearly fifty years, unknown even to so expert a critic as Buxton Forman, unexamined even by Amy Lowell. The pen markings make luminous the mind of Keats, approaching, pondering, sometimes closing with that greater mind; they show his eyes turned "upon fine phrases like a lover." It is the revelation of an intimate Keats, living in and by Shakespeare. Miss Spurgeon found him in these books, and through her essay makes it possible for us to find him.

Irrespective of the quantity of Keat's remarks on his reading which are printed and discussed in his biographies, something of the movement of his thought is lost among the

conventional letters of type. Caroline Spurgeon avoids this by including twenty plates, facsimiles of the pages which he marked with the sharpest interest. One can almost look over his shoulder and see the pen move. A deeper intimacy with him begins to grow. It is a closeness in mind like that sympathy of feeling which comes from reading his letters. We realize not only by the profuse underlining but by the appearance and, Miss Spurgeon says, by the texture of the pages, which plays he most frequently read. Some of the plates have been handled with such care that the dark surface of the margin, worn by his thumb, is still visible. *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet* follow through 1817—1818, *The Tempest* especially influencing the writing of *Endymion*. The plays serve as a kind of barometer of mental temper throughout his life. He underscored heavily the passages which pleased him in their imaginative quality; usually he drew down the margin beside lines whose meaning seemed particularly cogent. The impression of a respectful familiarity with his mental reactions is so strong that one reads the plays Miss Spurgeon reproduces at the end of the volume, anticipating his pleasure, thinking that two pages ahead there is a phrase which Keats is going to like!

Together with this fuller appreciation of his sensitiveness to literary expression, admiration for Keats as a semi-professional critic increases through reading the markings in his own hand. His articles on Kean define Keats's ability regarding the drama in general, and Shakespeare especially. He reasserts the claim forcibly in the notes he writes in the 'Princeton copy', as the books in Mr. Armour's library have been called. In *The Tempest* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* he suggests two valuable emendations to the text. In this somewhat formal aspect his criticism is more than worthy. Even when he is laughing shamelessly at Doctor Johnson's stolid appraisals which are appended in his edition to each play, Keats strikes at the center of the question raised. Once again one is impressed by his perfect poise of mind,—and his sense of humor. Through Johnson's paragraph at the end of *All's Well* Keats draws whirling circles, and with apt malice quotes "Wilt thou ever be a foul-mouthed, calumnising (sic) knave?"

When Cowden Clarke read aloud to him after school hours at Enfield, Keats began his discovery of Shakespeare.

As Keats grew the association grew in vital significance, spreading and deepening. In 1817 the first book he unboxed on the damp, solitary, and portentous journey to the Isle of Wight was "a Shakespeare—'there's my comfort' ". In 1820, the last year of his creative life, he wrote to Fanny Brawne, "My greatest torment since I have known you has been the fear of your being a little inclined to the Cresseid." This developing relation of his personality with Shakespeare's is the study of Mr. J. Middleton Murry's recent book (*Keats and Shakespeare*—Oxford 1924). It is his belief, not only that Keats was more like Shakespeare than any other English poet, but further that it was inevitable that Keats should accept finally no other guide, should stand close to no other poet. It is a brilliant piece of critical insight. The amazing part of it is that aside from the letters, he had as basis only Keats's markings of the folio edition, in which he read very few plays. Quite aside from its intrinsic importance, *Keats's Shakespeare* is interesting in that it sustains and amplifies Mr. Murry's book.

It is necessary to insist upon this connection in justice to Miss Spurgeon. With all the unpublished material before her eyes, with Keats's own Shakespeare in her hands, she was still closely limited. Interpretation had been put upon the material before the material itself was found. Earlier biographers had suggested the influence of Shakespeare on Keats, Mr. Murray had treated it definitively. Miss Spurgeon does with scholarly care what remained for her to do. Essentially this consists in making the material of these books available to all students of Keats. Without a thesis to develop, she merely describes or reproduces their content in part, presenting "an authentic record of the study and the love of our greatest poet by one whom many today place nearest him." She recognizes Keats's attitude towards Shakespeare with fine understanding, relating the plays to his life and poetry as did Keats himself. Because of Mr. Murry's book, proof and controversial discussion were unnecessary. She writes with ease, lucidly, sometimes with a simple eloquence. There is no embroidery, very little decoration of the essential substance. The material of her tremendous discovery is presented with a view to substantiating the work of other scholars, or to facilitating that which will follow. She might say with Amy Lowell,

"You marked it with light pencil upon a printed page,

Thus, with denoting finger, you make of yourself
an escutcheon to guide me to that in you which
is its essence.

But for the rest,

The part which most persists and is remembered,
I only know I compass it in loving and neither have,
nor need, a symbol."

S. S. S.

THE DESERT ROAD TO TURKESTAN

OWEN LATTIMORE

Little, Brown and Company 1929

An *Atlantic Monthly* Press Publication

A simple experiment may be performed to illustrate one of the perils to which writers, especially those dealing with territory to the East of the Caspian Sea, are exposed. The subject, who should possess average sensibilities and no more than the conventional literary and historical equipment, is seated in a comfortable chair; the experimenter then declaims a series of words such as "sarong", "topaz", "Samarkand", "Taj Mahal", "sandalwood", "monsoon", "musk". The reactions of the subject are plainly visible to the most unskilled observer; their intensity, considering the simple nature of the stimulus, is remarkable, and the lack of discrimination therein displayed is no less noteworthy. Possibly the patient is dimly aware that these words differ in the categories of human knowledge to which they refer, and even in geographical distribution; but to most of them he responds with hearty impartiality. The danger here is obvious. Finding that a few unconnected words, together with the opalescent fog that seems to emanate from them, have such power, the writer is tempted to shift onto them the burden of his task of interesting and amusing the reader.

Mr. Lattimore has not escaped the temptation. Proper names like Ku Ch'eng-tze are not as effective for purposes of reading aloud as are the place-names of Western Asia; but when craftily scattered over a page they lead the eye smoothly along, while what one likes to call one's critical faculties are lulled, by a wholly unfounded sense of unity with foreign

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lands and strange races, into a delicious somnolence. Mr. Lattimore has also, in the manner of a nervous orator who fears the roving eye and shuffling goloshes of a bored audience, fallen back on a common fallacy about the invariable comicality of lice. Social Service workers and even tourists in Italy,—as well as the patrons of the motion picture—are by this time aware that, as far as a large proportion of the earth's population is concerned, lice are of fairly frequent occurrence; that they are undesirable as close acquaintances, multiply rapidly, and when crushed emit a slight pop and a faintly disagreeable odor. Also that man even in a state of comparative civilization is not fond of bathing. But in Mr. Lattimore's estimation these indisputable phenomena apparently retain all the charm of novelty; and they are trotted out faithfully at every opportunity.

The most deplorable feature of these defects is that they arise, apparently, more from Mr. Lattimore's appraisal of his audience than from his own inclinations. The continuity, the complex unity of history is his basic theme—one which through all variations played on it has never become trite. His journey from Pekin to Urinchi and beyond was undertaken, he says, "in a longing to travel the caravan ways in the old manner of caravans, because I had a glimpse of what they meant—a survival from the past but more than that: one of the sources or headwaters of our life as it is." Possessed of wide experience and study in inner China, knowledge of the discoveries of other travelers, and familiarity with the language, he went not as the officially-fostered Competent Traveler, with an eye to the Picturesque and the Quaint, but as a sharer of the trials and dangers of the camel-pullers themselves, accepted by them as "an understandable person of their own type." The combination of this attitude with an unfortunate fancy in regard to the reading public has led to a series of irrelevant interpolations in what might have been a fine study of existing conditions.

The result is a disconcertingly uneven book. After pages of fresh and vivid description come phrases like "the clangor of their bells pulsing through the pastel evening" which might have been created by any twelve year old in the throes of her first romance about the Arab chieftain and his maiden fair. At intervals throughout a detailed and interesting chapter on camels and the traditions of the road, the author feels it neces-

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sary to refer to the fact that "the stink is thrice wonderful and past all whooping." At the conclusion of a serious discussion of the economic disorder of China he smirks self-consciously: "and as I thought all these high thoughts, I scratched myself—." In the midst of his most facetious curvetings he suddenly pauses to remark, with no transition whatsoever, "He fixes its position at $40^{\circ} 43' 9''$ north and $106^{\circ} 0' 0''$ east. . . he reached it on his thirteenth march from Wang-yeh Fu in roughly a straight line and describes it as 4352 feet above sea level. He then crossed the Hurku hills and the Kuei-hua-Uliassutai road on his way to Urga, which he reached on September 17. Thus Bain-tuhum would be roughly a third of the way between Wan-yeh Fu and Urga." And these digressions into the fine points of geography are in turn thickly interlarded with passages of sheer Halliburton.

Mr. Lattimore had here, both in his general theme and in his specific knowledge and experience, a meaty subject. But in his consideration for the delicate digestion of his readers he has chopped the good red beef so fine as very nearly to disguise it, and mixed it with an assortment of cabbages and pungent but not very nourishing condiments. The resulting stew is tasty and high-flavored. But it seems nevertheless somewhat thin; one's sensations on completing it are not those of entire satisfaction; and one suspects that it is the taste of the garlic that will linger most persistently.

E. P.

BOSTON

A CONTEMPORARY HISTORICAL NOVEL

UPTON SINCLAIR

Albert and Charles Boni, 1928.

Upton Sinclair calls his recently published "Boston"—"a contemporary historical novel." Such a phrase is, from its very associations, unfortunate, for we are inevitably reminded of all the great historical novels of the past—the brilliant canvases of Scott or Dickens. Perhaps, however, the use of "contemporary" saves it from too odious a comparison. As a tragedy, also, the novel suffers. Mr. Sinclair is not content to follow in the steps of Sophocles—to choose one aspect from a well-known story. On the other hand, he must tell the story of Sacco and Vanzetti from beginning to end. The

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resulting novel, therefore, was too long to be published in "*The Bookman*" in its entirety as first planned. The concluding chapters, we learn, were issued in a separate pamphlet for the benefit of interested readers; and the book, when published, filled two volumes.

In any novel, however, historical or otherwise, we demand that the characters live. Mr. Sinclair chooses Back Bay inhabitants as the objects of his satire. He sends little old Cornelia Thornwell, wife of a former governor of Massachusetts, down to Plymouth to be fellow boarder of Bartolomeo Vanzetti. Consequently, she turns Radical, and arouses the antagonism of her Back Bay family when she sides with Sacco and Vanzetti throughout their trial. She, as well as the other characters, are mere puppets in the hands of Mr. Sinclair. When he jerks the string they move—with very wooden gestures. For this reason, they serve as foils to Mr. Sinclair's main thesis, which is to justify Sacco and Vanzetti and the eyes of the world.

As propaganda Upton Sinclair's book is admirable. If we are not already converted to the cause, so to speak, we are soon won over by endless repetition—monotony. It is like the drone of the law court that he so despises, and we are tempted to suggest that a law report would have been more successful under Mr. Sinclair's handling than a novel.

But then, the book is saved from utter mediocrity by a number of clever and epigrammatic witticisms. Then, too, Upton Sinclair's daringly flippant treatment of men in high places, as well as his audacious satire of the country as a whole, make his book in that sense memorable. Yet, even details of this order do not save "*Boston*," because, in general, the style is too monotonous, the canvas too unlighted to hold our interest. Indeed, we may venture to say that—as a novel, *Boston* is nothing—as an historical novel, less than nothing, while as propaganda, it is excellent.

Barbara Damon Simison.

THE WELL OF LONELINESS

RADCLYFFE HALL

Covici-Friede, New York 1928

*"What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish?"*

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A problem that has long puzzled mankind is that of the standards by which a work of art should be judged, and particularly now when standards are confused or dispensed with altogether, the question becomes of overwhelming importance.

"Art is unmoral," cry the supporters of one school, "its function is neither to instruct, uplift or chastise. Art is its own excuse for being." On the other hand there are those critics who say that art should be a moral and spiritual influence towards divorcing man from his baser passions. It is not our purpose to argue the respective merits of these points of view but it is our desire to point out the unfortunate results of mingling the two.

A book, *The Well of Loneliness*, by Radclyffe Hall, banned in New York last week, was also suppressed in England. The book, as every newspaper-reading person in the world must by this time know, discusses a problem of sexual inversion in a manner which appeared to certain authorities unnecessary and unpleasant, leading them to take action against it. Following the news of its suppression in England the book received great notoriety, promptly succeeded by its appearance, disappearance and wide fame in this country. We need not repeat the praise that has been lavished on it by its supporters, nor the blame cast by its detractors, we are concerned with the question of whether or not, artistically, it is a valid piece of writing.

Considering *The Well of Loneliness*, as a work of art, then, the book is unsuccessful. It is written in an incredible style that belongs with three-decker novels and the Victorians. The ponderous solemnity of the innumerable pages creates a breathlessness in the reader. There are a few touches of pathos, whimsy, or what you will, in the beautifully English, sentimental treatment of animals. The favorite horse shot on the spot where he was first mounted, the adoption of a stray dog in Paris, these conventional bits of comic relief lumber so obviously into the story that the pages of a childhood classic, where the villain is redeemed by giving sugar to the garbage man's horse, flash before the eyes. Except for these elephant-like touches of humor the book plods steadily and drearily along. As a book it has no excuse for being, as a sociological study of a case it need only have occupied a quarter as many pages. Written undoubtedly with a

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great deal of sincerity and feeling, it provides a perfect example of the statement that sincerity and a photographic attention to details are not enough, there must be something more to make "roots clutch" and "branches grow out of this stony rubbish."

Compton Mackenzie in a recently published book used a very different method of attack. His characters gamboled through three hundred pages of the most fantastic idiocy and fairly amusing silliness. No serious moral problem is discussed, there are no solemnities, and despite the rather repetitious quality of its levity the book is fairly successful, in a thoroughly slight and frivolous way. That a competent and able author should waste his time on such a futile book seems far more extraordinary than his women.

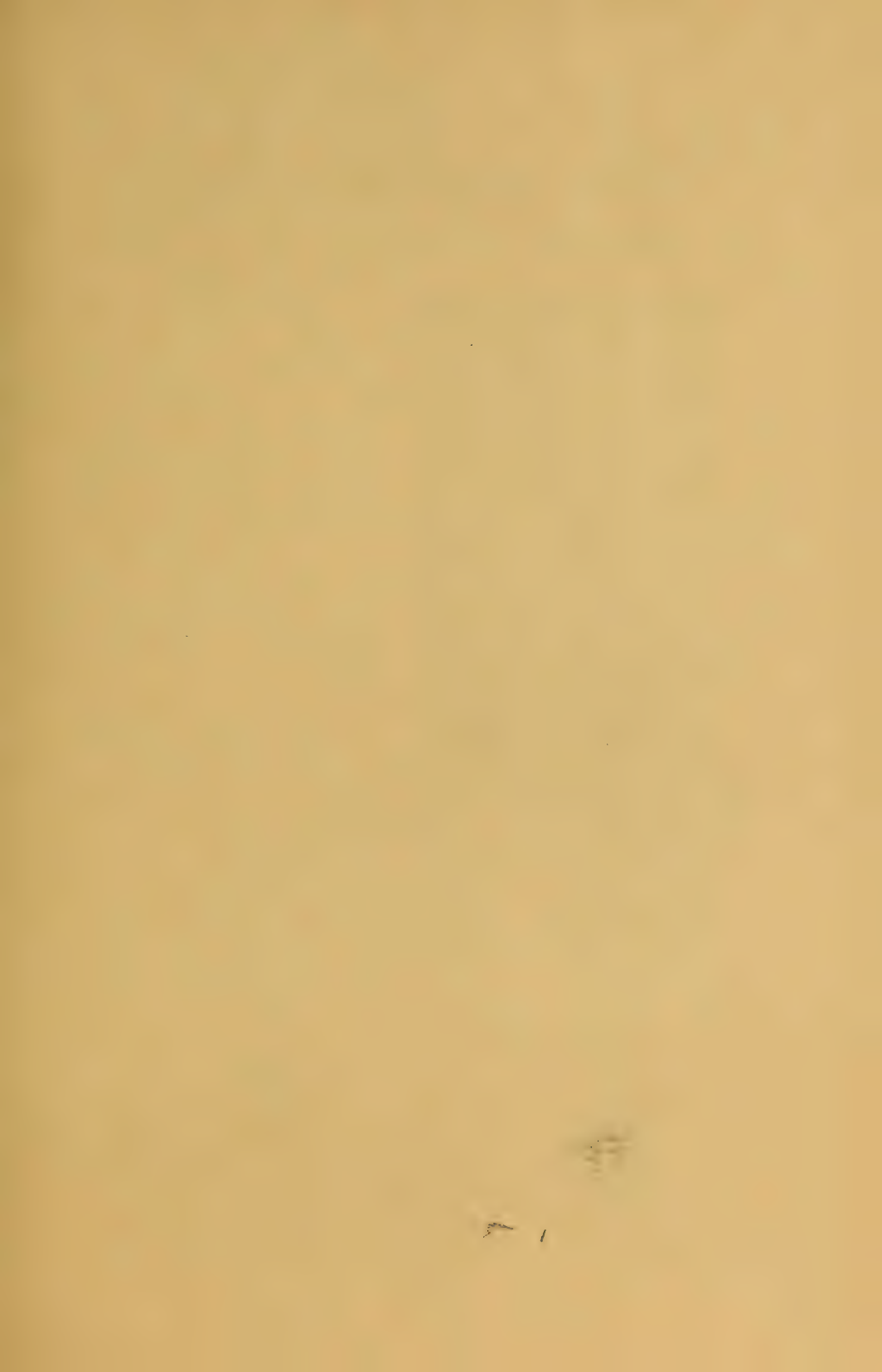
Proust, on the other hand has pictured M. de Charlus and Albertine with a keen insight, and a complete lack of sentimentality, with an intellectual honesty and a detached impartiality, besides which the dreary Stephen, two-dimensional and unconvincing, can take no stand. Proust makes no attempt at justification, at preaching a theory. He states a fact, explains causes and consequences, analyzes the farthest depths of human consciousness with that delicate instrument, his pen, and when by means of the casual phrase or gesture of a character he has through twenty pages laid bare that character's soul, Proust neither praises, blames nor accuses.

Miss Hall's book, however, has a good deal of the tract in its substance. It attempts to prove the rightness of a stand against the world, and for that reason it cannot be completely honest and accurate, it must be prejudiced and over-emphasized. Lacking in all capacity for suggestion, the details are generally given a neat twist by the use of a generalization or *cliché*.

If we have treated the book harshly it is because the confusion of two standards of criticism has been so very apparent. To ban "*The Well of Loneliness*" for its subject matter is an insult to intelligent minds, it should have been banned long ago for sheer bad style and stupidity. There is as much of a fallacy in calling it a bad book, from the point of view of morals, because of its subject, as there would be in calling it a good book, from the point of view of art, because of its suppression. Let its dismissal be that it is boring.

"Granted that it is boring, why make all this fuss about it then?" some reader may ask, and it is a fair question. Censorship gives a book prestige of a sort, and usually a wide, if underground, circulation. In an institution of learning, of course, we do not expect intelligent and educated readers to be tempted by the juiciness of forbidden fruit without noting the rottenness of its skin. We write this for that misguided minority, however, which, dazzled by the censor's magic, eagerly swallows down all tasteless pap that publishers dish up, salted with the appreciation of intelligent reviewers, peppered with the damnation of the Old Lady From Dubuque.

P. S. F.



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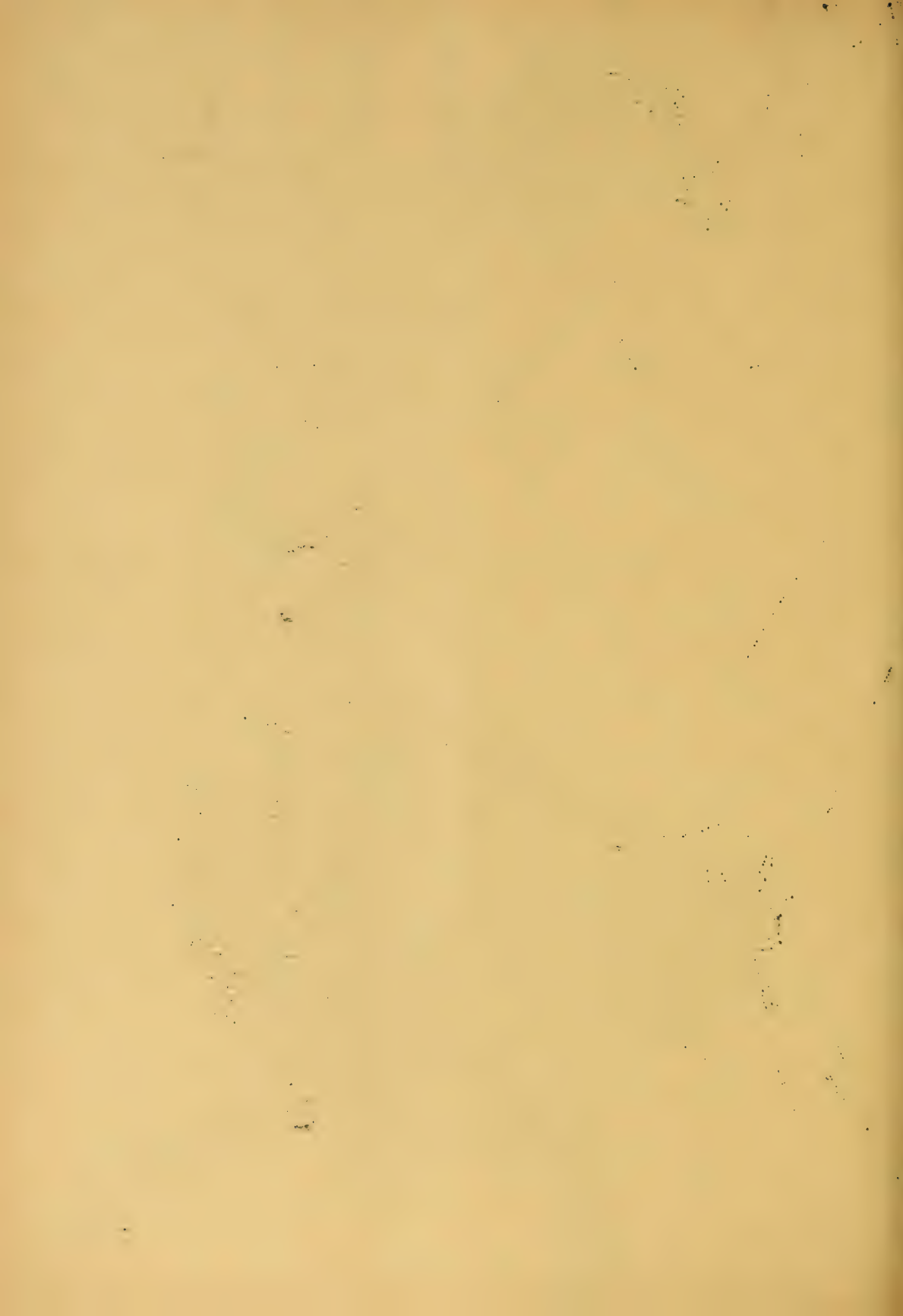
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VOL. XXXVII

APRIL, 1929

No. 7

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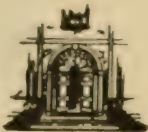
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PURSUIT

ELIZABETH WHEELER

THE old logging road, so long forgotten, was again remembered by one who had known it well. Across it the shadows of the trees were pushing eastward when a man came into view, running swiftly. He leapt over the sodden ties from log to log where the logs still were, and where they were not, he bounded hastily in the grass. On he came with unchanging pace, till suddenly his head jerked up and he ran faster. Where a dying silver birch leaned outward from the oaks on his right hand he turned aside and ran with unfaltering feet along an invisible trail. When the road behind him was quite lost to view, he stopped and leaned against a tree, listening.

Amid the vast remoteness of the forest he was a sinister figure. His clothes alone made him that. They hung on his thin frame like the clothes on a scare-crow, and they were gray, with horizontal stripes. His hair was clipped short all over his head, giving him a shorn look which intensified the grayish pallor of his face, such a pallor as comes only from living long behind damp and dark stone walls. It was a gaunt face with a mouth and chin set in determination and a pair of hollow eyes that peered out with a vacant intensity, seeing nothing. His whole body was strung taut with listening.

But the only sound that came to his ears was the call of a hermit thrush. He relaxed suddenly, and a light broke over his face. "God, it's good to hear you again," he said

softly. His eyes were seeing now with a restless hunger, but also they were anxious.

A few swift minutes passed while he stood there. Then he struck off into a forest apparently trackless and illimitable. But he walked as one who knows his destination, and again he picked out an invisible trail among the trees and crowding undergrowth. Dead leaves and twigs hardly crackled beneath his step; he knew the Indians' secret, and his stride was rhythmical and tireless, leaving behind him a hundred and a thousand trees. Before him they climbed the ever-steepening slope in whispering legions whose vanguard camped upon the shoulders of the mountains. Around him reared their trunks—the smooth gray of beeches, the deep-furrowed bark of oaks and maples, and the ghostly white of the lady of the woods—reaching up through the shadows to the green leaves gilded by the falling sun. And behind the tracery of the leaves he could see the sky. Above him and around him the horizon of his sight was bounded only by the limit of his vision; and beyond his vision he felt that the space of trees and sky was limitless.

The line of his mouth relaxed and the anxiety dwindled in his eyes. He looked about him lingeringly, as a man returned from exile looks on the remembered things of home. The sun, slanting through the trees, was warm on his back, and the fragrance of balsam breathed securely. A chipmunk flashed across his path, scurried up a tree and sat scolding at him from a high branch. "Don't you give me away, you little devil," he said, shaking his fist, and looked back reluctantly as he passed in his swinging stride.

The sun was climbing higher up the trees and the way was growing steeper. He slackened his pace to ease the unaccustomed thumping of his heart. Where an ancient hemlock had fallen in the trail he stopped again to listen, and was answered only by the myriad voices of the woods—the whistle of a thrush, the busy tapping of a flicker, the soft pat of dropping pine needles, and the sound of a brook pouring over stones. Around a bend in the trail he found it and knelt to drink, plunging his face in the icy water. When he rose again, it was to breathe deeply and fling wide his arms. Then his eyes caught a vista through the trees. He was high on the mountain now. Below him the forest fell away, so dense that the foliage made a solid pattern, the black of

conifers interwoven with the light green of the hardwoods. Down in the valley where the forest stopped, the fields stretched away to the mountains beyond; but in the midst of the fields he found what his eyes sought—a grim cluster of red brick buildings with narrow windows, narrower still when you looked out of them from behind the gray walls of a cell. He threw back his head exultantly and then turned his back on the valley. A cold shadow crept up out of it as the sun's rim touched the mountain-top beyond.

He sped on, his feet making no sound in the deepening silence, his eyes never missing the trail in the waning light. The world that he had left dropped away from him; only the vast forest-clad mountains lay before him, stretching northward unbroken to the frontier, eastward to the sea, wrapped in the stillness of descending night.

Suddenly the silence was rent with the long-drawn wail of a siren. Midway in his stride he halted, and caught hold of a young sapling; it shook beneath his grip. He held his breath. The sound rose out of the valley, echoing among the mountains, filling the upper air till the whole universe was engulfed in it. Then it died only to wail again, and die, and again it wailed and died above him on the rocky summits. His face had gone gray, and his knees turned to water. He strained his eyes downward through the trees, but he could not see. In one swift instant night had come upon him, the black night of the forest, dropping from the mountains like a cloud, without warning and without light.

Now it is one thing to find an invisible trail by day with high hope in your heart, but quite another thing to find it by night in an unlit dark with pursuit at your heels. Immediately he knew this, and shivered with something other than cold. But he set his teeth and stepped resolutely forward with his right hand outstretched, groping, to guide him in the path. His left arm he held crooked before his face as a shield against the leaves and branches that brushed him and snatched at him. The trees were no longer numberless hosts advancing before him, league upon league, and retreating behind him as he passed; they were become a wall of darkness, moving nearer, barring his way with their trunks and boughs, compassing him about with the knowledge of their presence. At each step they tore at his clothes and slashed at his hands and face; at each step he shrank, expect-

ing them, but steadily plodded on. No longer his feet trod silently. They tripped over roots. Dead twigs snapped and stones rolled behind him.

He stopped to listen. A stone brought up against a tree far below with a thud that was magnified in the silence. But after that, there was no more silence. A thousand small noises travelled over the ground and through the trees, rustling, sliding, whispering, crackling. The forest was moving nearer. The dark was alive with sound, so that he could not hear. He strained his ears to listen; and his eyes ached with the intense effort to probe the blackness. But there were no lights anywhere in the forest. Far above in a murky sky wandered a few burnt-out stars.

He started on his way again. The woods were blacker than before. The noises followed him, were all about him, creeping closer. A clammy chill ran up his spine, making him jump sideways and face about, holding up his arm to ward off a blow. None fell, but the chill remained, so that now he shrank also from what might be behind him.

The way grew steeper and his progress slower. He had been groping step by step, but now he was crawling on his hands and knees over rock ledges. He did not know where the trail was, nor if he had lost it, but only that he must be nearing timber line. The leaves that brushed his face had given way to the needled prongs of spruces that jabbed at him. And the trees must be getting shorter for an icy wind chilled him as it passed. He heard it whirl in the spruces; then it roared in the pines below, and rustled the leaves as it swept down into the valley. Faintly and far-off a hound bayed, and his blood ran cold. But as the baying grew louder, his reason told him it was only an owl. So he struggled on again.

He moved like a snail now, for his legs were leaden weights to be dragged after a body chilled with cold, faint with hunger and weariness, driven only by the fear that followed him. His knees smarted from the cuts of the rocks. His arms ached from the strain of lifting himself over the ledges; and he had to clench his teeth to keep them from chattering. He stopped often now, utterly spent, and lay huddled among the rocks. But he could not rest, for always his nerves were tense with listening. His eyes throbbed and jerked like the eyes of one in a high fever. And he was cold,

colder than he had ever been even in the damp of a prison cell. But this was the price of his liberty, not yet won, so he dragged himself on once more. The trees shrank; he could feel their tops now. But the rocks were steeper. He was sure that an hour had gone before he let himself rest again.

The night was passing. The blackness faded to gray and the stars were snuffed out. It grew lighter, but still he could see nothing. It was as if the black bandage over his eyes had been exchanged for a gray veil. The dawn had come, wrapped in an impenetrable shroud of fog. Out of it loomed the jagged ramparts of the rocks, towering above him, their battlements lost in the cloud. They were cold and wet and he was colder than ever, but the summit was nearing.

At last he reached it and fell panting in the stiff grass between two boulders. His lungs felt near to bursting and a wave of faintness darkened his sight. For a moment, all too short, he knew nothing. Then he remembered, and sat up. At a distance of ten feet on all sides a gray wall of cloud shut him in like the walls of a prison, and the gray roof of the cloud pressed above his head. He could hear the thumping of his heart and his labored breathing, but outside there was silence, the dead silence of oblivion. The world that he had known was lost to him, its myriad noises muffled, forest and valley blotted out, and he was lost to the world. He was safe amid the fog as he had not been safe in the dark of the forest. But he was also a captive. Beyond those intangible gray walls the mountains and the secret-sharing forest rolled away to the frontier and to the sea. But where? Which was north and which east? And which the fateful way that led back, crossing straight the serpentine trail of his flight, to the valley and the prison?

He dared not leave the summit till he knew. Meanwhile he shook with cold and his head swam with hunger. Furthermore, he reflected, in the shelter of the forest climbing would be easy now. It was this that goaded him to explore the summit for a sign, however dim, to point his way. But in his gropings he stumbled upon a patch of mountain cranberries, a dull red carpet in the mist. He picked with both hands. They were hard and sour but he ate greedily all he could find. Yet still unrelaxing he kept his guard, listening for a sound in the silence, watching for a rift in the cloud.

At length the sign was given. For a brief instant the cloud rolled back, unveiling the shadowy cone of a nearby peak. But it was enough. As the fog pressed in upon him, he started once more upon his way, a lonely but a resolute figure. The gray striped clothes hung on his shivering frame, wet, soiled and torn. His hands were scratched and blue with the cold, his face haggard and weary. But the set mouth and the steady eyes bespoke an unshaken purpose. Unfaltering he limped away over the rocks. The mist engulfed him, and presently he was received into the forest whose secret trails were the warders of his fate.

NO, I CAN'T MARRY YOU

PATTY WOOD

Bright in the morning,
Quaint at afternoon—
O I am certain-sure
Of what will be your tune.

Charming in the evening,
Sweet (ah sweet!) at night,
'Tis pleasing music, yes,
For something rather light.

But—mornings *full* of brightness,
Afternoons *all* quaint
(You said yourself mine wasn't
The patience of a saint)

Every evening charming,
Night upon sweet night—
Darling, all my life I couldn't
Smile and be polite.

REVENGE IS SWEET

ELIZABETH BOIES

WE had just missed "Ignorance is Bliss." Every noon as we hurried home from school just on the corner we used to meet a tall lanky girl coming from school 35 on the hill. She had braids which were tied up with purple ribbons, never any other color, and she held her head which, I always said, was all nose, high, high in the air as she walked disdainfully by us. She never turned it when we called her hook nose or beak face or even when we attempted to pull off her purple ribbons. All she ever did was to say with a half smile which annoyed us beyond anything, "Ignorance is bliss." So that became her name, a name which she seemed to enjoy, for the more we shrieked it the louder her irritating "Ignorance is bliss" rose accompanied with that half smile. But this day we missed Ignorance. Certainly we had hurried just as fast as ever before and arrived at the same time as usual,—but no Ignorance. Scarcely concealing our disappointment we walked dejectedly toward home, all zest for food gone.

"Darn it", said Pancake-batter named thus because of his flattened face which he said he got from running full force and unexpectedly into a wall in the dark. "Darn it," he exclaimed again. "Elmer is the only one who ever got a purple ribbon off her ding braids and I bet him five allies that I'd get one today, but how ya going to do it when the old Ignorance don't show up?"

"First time she's missed too," replied Gut sadly.

"Well, it doesn't matter much to you," said Pancake viciously. "What if you'd bet five allies. Brand new allies at that," he added in an undertone.

"Ah, don't be such a milk weed, Pancake," cried Gronie, a fat jolly boy who concocted all the plans for our gang. "You aren't the only one who's mad. Heck, I've been kept after school for a whole week now and missed her every day."

But just at this moment Kendall Jones appeared around the corner and immediately our attention was diverted. Kendall was his mother's darling. He played the ukelele beautifully at all her bridge parties and before we had met Ignorance he had been our chief amusement; and so his appearance at this crucial time banished Ignorance and aroused us to great things.

"Sissy, sissy, Kendall," screamed Mayor, my sister, and much the most cruel of all of us when it came to teasing. "His mother has to wash his ears. His mother has to—."

"Children, children!"

We looked up. Mrs. Pierce was leaning from the second story window of her house. "How can you be so vulgar? I want this nonsense to stop at once. Do you hear?"

"Yes, Mrs. Sourface," muttered Pancake under his breath.

"And besides," Mrs. Pierce went on, "Mrs. Sharpe is asleep." Mrs. Sharpe was her twin sister who lived across the street and who was almost as disliked as Mrs. Pierce. Elmer claimed that she was worse because she had once thrown a glass of water down on him when he was taking her gate off the hinges on Hallowe'en. "Just like her to have been looking out," he had said. "At least old Pierce went to visit her aunt in Moosie for that night. Can't see why she couldn't have taken her dear Sharpie with her." However, I disagreed with his opinion of Sharpie because she usually had to call on Mrs. Pierce for help. "And," I said, "she hardly ever had an inspiration like that glass of water one unless her sister was with her."

"Never mind," Elmer had said, "that glass of water was cold!"

But now Mrs. Pierce had slammed her window loud enough to awaken Mrs. Sharpe, even if she had lived at the other end of the block.

"Well, I guess I'll go get some lunch," said Gut. But she did not go before we had vowed eternal hatred for the twin sisters and had decided to meet soon again in order to formulate a plan to "get even" with the hated "old crabs." "So they'll never forget us," ended Pancake with his fists clenched.

The next day at school we let Rubber Neck into our club for the destruction of Mrs. Sharpe and Mrs. Pierce.

We let her in because she was always necessary on adventures like this. She had the unique quality of being able to stretch her neck so that she could see far above any one else and could look into almost any window not too far from the ground. As yet we had no concrete idea for their embarrassment or destruction but we felt that sooner or later Rubber Neck would come in handy. She always did.

That afternoon as we were roller skating furiously up the Pierce's avenue, as we called it, on our way to Elmer's house where our meeting was to be held, Mrs. Sharpe leaned from her window:

"Not so much noise. Mrs. Pierce is asleep."

"Yes,— I was,— before all this clatter came," Mrs. Pierce called from her window where she had been sitting sewing all of the time and she had been, too, because Rubber Neck saw her and Rubber Neck can see things like that.

"We have got to act at once," said Gronie with a forceful air. "This thing has gone entirely too far."

"You said it, Gronie," Mayor replied as both windows slammed simultaneously, after a few more scathing remarks which we pretended not to hear.

"I think it would be fine to set both their houses on fire!" said Gut as we were settled on the floor in Elmer's cellar.

"Nix, Gut," said Gronie. "They could put it out before they burnt up."

"Well, we might tie them up," I ventured.

"Tie them up, hump, pretty funny. Who's going to do it I'd like to know?" cried Pancake.

"I'd like to put some dead gold-fish down Piercie's back," said Mayor. "I heard her tell Mrs. Jones once that dead fish gave her goose flesh. Now I ask you,—what is goose flesh?"

"I know what it is," said Rubber Neck. "Once when my canary died I was going to bury it in a shoe box and mother saw it and got measles all over her for a minute. They didn't stay on longer than that but she wouldn't let me touch the canary and I—."

"Oh, never mind, Rubber Neck," interrupted Elmer, "we aren't interested in your old canary and goose measles or whatever it is. This meeting was called," he went on

slamming his fist on an upright box, "this meeting was called to decide upon,—to decide upon—."

"How we'd get even with the old crooks," finished Pancake quickly. "Let's get down to business or we'll never decide."

"Well, I have a wonderful idea," Gronie said. "I have a nice dead rat, all smelly 'nd everything. We might put it on the doorstep."

"When did you get it, Gronie?" I asked, filled with awe.

"Oh, I took it from the rat trap in the pantry and kept it for awhile."

"Gee, Gronie, that's wonderful."

"You bet. We could do something with that. Make them mad as hops when they tried to come out the front door."

"Can't you see the old crabs when they see it? Gee whiz!" Pancake whistled through his teeth.

"Whose doorstep shall we put it on?" inquired Elmer looking at the practical side. Therein ensued a bitter argument as to who deserved it the more and ended only when Gronie agreed to take another from the trap so they would both be treated alike.

"We may have to wait a few days," Gronie said. "because we may not catch one for awhile and even when we do we've got to wait until it smells like the first one."

At last the day arrived when both rats were ready. We carried them in boxes to school and hid them behind an ash barrel until after the afternoon session, which was the appointed time for our deed.

"Who's going to put them on the doorstep?" I whispered to Pancake as he stood next to me at the blackboard.

"Don't know," muttered Pancake, "but say, how many times does twenty seven go into this damn number?"

Finally the last class was over. Gronie and Elmer were given the honor of placing the rats on either doorstep while we stood hidden around the corner of Mrs. Pierce's house.

Elmer quickly performed his duty, having deposited his rat in front of Mrs. Sharpe's door, but something seemed to be wrong with Gronie. He did not return at once. We peered around the corner. Gronie pointed at the Pierce baby who was sleeping on the porch.

"Fraid I'll wake it," he murmured.

"Ah, go on, Gronie," said Pancake.

"Shut up, Pancake. Do it yourself if you are so anxious," replied Gronie a little too loudly because the baby after a few spluttering noises began to cry.

It was at this point that Gut conceived her great and miraculous idea.

"Here," she said handing Rubber Neck a handful of little stones and pebbles from a nearby flower bed, "drop these in the baby's mouth. Quickly. That'll shut it up."

"Yes, go on, Rubber Neck," we all cried, marveling at the brilliance of the suggestion.

So Rubber Neck with careful manoeuverings reached the railing of the porch near which the baby's carriage was placed. She climbed up on to the ledge on the outside of the railing; then stretching her long neck, she located the baby's open mouth, and deliberately dropped the pebbles one by one down into it. With a gurgling strangle the crying stopped and Gronie placed the rat quickly in its strategic position in front of door. But Mrs. Pierce, aroused by the baby's crying, had come to the window almost at the same moment that Rubber Neck began dropping the pebbles, and for once we saw more than Rubber Neck who was too interested in her own job. Mrs. Pierce and Mrs. Sharpe were coming out of Mrs. Pierce's door toward Rubber Neck—but no—. They screamed at the sight of the rat; screamed again at the sight of Rubber Neck and the pebbles; and then before poor Rubber Neck could get away both Mrs. Pierce and Mrs. Sharpe, being scared to go near the mat, had jumped from the window onto the porch, one saving the baby from strangling and the other practically strangling Rubber Neck. We left at this point, quickly hurrying down the back alley where we could not be seen and to our appointed meeting place for discussing the effects of our plans.

"Whee,—" groaned Gronie, "that was narrow. Poor Rubber Neck, what do you suppose they are doing to her? We ought to go back and help her."

"Yes," said Elmer sarcastically. "I'd like to know who's going? Not me, I can tell you that."

"Well anyway," said Pancake, "it was worth it. Did you ever see such expressions in all your life as the old

crooks had when they saw the rat? Gee, I wouldn't have missed it even if I had had to be Rubber Neck."

"Rubber Neck didn't see their faces," I said.

"Oh, I know," replied Pancake, "but I mean—even if I had to be strangled."

"Well, I hope they haven't really killed her," said Mayor sadly.

"Pooh," replied Gronie, "they couldn't do that. They'd be murderers if they did and the policemen could shoot holes through them."

"It was great though," Elmer muttered happily, recalling the shrieks of the twin sisters. "The only thing which could have been better would have been to have old Sharpie at home instead of over at Piercie's. Although I don't know. They did look pretty funny jumping out of the window on top of Rubber Neck."

At this moment Rubber Neck, a disheveled and tattered Rubber Neck, appeared at the far end of the alley. We all rushed to meet her.

"Say, you were wonderful."

"Hot stuff, Rubber Neck, old pal."

"You sure were the cat's whiskers, Rubber, old girl!"

"Yes, a regular heroine," I added.

"Well," said Rubber Neck, wiping her bloody nose, "If I am a heroine I resign the position—forever."

PHANTOM

EDITH STARKS

One strange night

One dark night

In the half-light

I saw the ghost of an old sail.

Close by the rock

Where fog lay

Misty and grey

And lulled in the spray

That washed on the dock


I saw the ghost of an old white sail . . .

She was all lighted up from below

And the waves took her by . . very steady . . very slow.

VOICES

LUCIA WIEMER

HE group in front had been so interested in the cave that until the crash came they had not noticed each other. Then it was too late. When the land slid it severed the wires and at the same time shut out any vestige of daylight that might have crept so far. It also shut out the rest of the party.

A man's voice—pleasantly young and a little breathless said, "Boy! was that a narrow escape?!"

There was a silence pricked by the sighs of people catching their breath. Then, a little in front of them, another man spoke, "We seem to be rather trapped," he said, "There was a slide in front of us too." His voice was very English and a little slow.

A woman's hysterical tremulo wanted to know, "Hasn't someone a match? It's so dark."

While the pleasant boy-voice stated proudly that it was in training, and a new man piped something about nervous breakdowns and not smoking, the Englishman's lighter flared—throwing golden lights on his face, caressing his cheek-bones, recoiling from the black sockets of his eyes. Over in the corner a figure stood tight against the wall. "Who is that?" he asked sharply. A woman's low voice picked its way carefully through the statement, "It is I. My name is Lola Bentham."

Half embarrassed by the evident cultivation of her voice the Englishman bowed slightly, "How do you do", he said, and it was indicative of the state of their minds that no one laughed. There was a quick snap and the flame went out.

"Don't put it out." The sweetly hysterical voice rose in sudden terror.

The Englishman explained gently, "It is our only light. I haven't filled it for several days and we may be in here for some time. Besides", he added, "There is no use in burning up oxygen."

"Oh."

Darkness closed in. Nobody had thought about oxygen. Now their minds began to grasp the significance of the situation. The boy-voice said, "My God—this is terrible" several times and shook.

After a time the man with the nervous breakdown began to cry. "I can't stand this," he said. "I tell you I can't stand it.—All alone in the dark.—I can't see you—it's like voices in my mind—as if I were going mad. I've got to touch someone." His body scuffed against the wall as he pulled himself to his feet.

"Don't! Don't come near me!" The hysterical voice ripped the darkness.

"Perhaps none of us had better move. The electric wires may be lying about." The tightly level voice of Lola Bentham came forth in little jets of energy as though she paused to catch her breath before each phrase.

When she had finished there sounded the slither of the man's body as it sank to the ground.

"Jolly little place this. Talk about your Black Hole of Calcutta."—the boy-voice no longer shook. Its owner had made his adjustments. In the darkness the Englishman smiled, but no one talked. Each person sat in complete insularity. Voices, in the blackness, sounded sudden and strange; seemed to wander about the narrow prison seeking an outlet and to return to their owners as though they had never gone out. One question was in every mind—"Will they get to us in time?"; but no one dared to ask it. So they sat while the man with the nervous breakdown moaned and someone bit his nails.

After time had made itself unbearable, the hysterical voice shattered itself in a question, "Couldn't we have light for just a minute?"

The little scratch of the wheel announced the flaring of light below the, what now seemed beautiful, face of the Englishman. He took out his watch and held it close to the flame. "Eleven o'clock," he told them. They had been there eight hours. He snapped the lighter shut and put it in his pocket again.

I am like God, he thought,—holding light and darkness in my hands. He could not know how near to a God

he was to those others out there in blackness. He was to them the only tangible person in a sea of unknown voices and blank sound. They trusted him because they had seen him. The others might be anything—in their fevered imaginations became everything.

It was beginning to get stuffy now and his head ached a little. Too bad there had to be so many of them. Now two could have lived maybe a day and a half. Twenty hours would do for five of them. A horrible thought seized his mind—

It occurred to him that the same thought might have struck someone else. He would be the one they would get too. His position had been clearly defined by the light. The heavy breathing of someone seemed to come nearer, but he did not move.

He wished absurdly that he could see them. In the darkness they all became potential murderers. His fancy inflamed, he now felt their faces surrounding him—grotesque and distorted. If only he could see them! Probably they had kind stupid faces—ordinary candid eyes; but, after all, he could not, even in a situation like this one, go around with his lighter saying, "Let me see your face."; and so they remained for him almost disembodied demons—voices in the dark.

Thus, some time later, when the voice of Lola Bentham wrenched out a request for light, he braced himself as the flame sprang into existence; but nothing happened.—only the silly quaver of the boy-voice, "What an ad for a lighter this would make."

Surprised to find himself still alive the Englishman snapped the device shut and replaced it.

Darkness stood like a wall in front of him; pressed in on him. To die like a rat in a hole—strangling within yourself and only voices to hold to! The hysterical voice had not spoken for hours now. Perhaps she had fainted. Perhaps—Well—they could all live half an hour longer if she had.

It was the man with the nervous breakdown who heard the first faint sounds of digging. "They're coming" he whimpered, "For God's sake, hurry!"

It had gotten to the point where they were pushing with their chests in order to breathe, but four of them scuffled to

their feet and the flame of the Englishman's lighter shone like a star.

Quite still they sat and waited—the Englishman cross-legged with the lighter in front of him, like an ancient fire-god. Lola Betham's voice had passed into silence. A little later the lighter sputtered and went out.

The Englishman spoke, "And I suppose when they get to us there is a chance of this part's falling in on us."

The boy-voice was only a whisper now, "I wouldn't mind dying," he said, "if I could only have a little light to see what I was doing."

The noises of digging came nearer; echoed through the hot stillness. The man with the nervous breakdown scratched feebly at the imprisoning stones—tossed them frantically aside. One fell at the Englishman's feet. The knocking became a roar. There was a crash of rock, and a stream of cool air rippled through the cave. It was sweet—like jasmine and clover. Through the hole a grimy hand appeared, holding a lantern which the man with the nervous breakdown took and held, like a child with a toy.

There was calling and heaving and grunting and the sound of people running about, and then they were all out in the air, and there was light and the Englishman could see the people who stood over him. They had noses and mouths and eyes and they smiled at him. There was color too—greys and blues and wistaria in the sky—white and black and dull and green in the rocks. It was all keen and very, very beautiful after the sick smudge of yellow which had been his light for sixteen hours and which had seemed so precious not long ago. Suddenly he remembered his lighter and struggled to his feet. "I left something—must get it," he explained and started towards the cave. Somebody caught him by the shoulder and as he stood he saw the crawling slide of land that buried his lighter forever.

A little sick, he turned around in time to see two cars drive away. "The two gentlemen", somebody told him, "The ladies have been taken to the hospital."

The Englishman smiled. So he would never see them—voices they would always remain. But it didn't matter now.

LONELINESS

EDITH STARKS

This new loneliness is stern
Yet ground as fine
As ivory sand
That sweeps the long sea line
Where green salt-waters burn;
Stern—as the great hand
Of the wind who rides
Along the beach's curving way
All day
Unmindful of the tides.

FEAR

BARBARA DAMON SIMISON

PETER could not remember a time when he had not been afraid. Fear came as naturally to him, was as much a part of him, as snow comes to winter, as the roof is a part of the house that the snow covers. It had always been thus, he reflected, as he walked along—only, as the years slipped by, there had been more and more fears in his life. Perhaps he grew more sensitive to them as he grew older, or else things happened so as to accentuate them. Just when his mother and father were helping him to overcome a particular fear something occurred that tended to deepen it. It had been so all his life, he recollected, and those things he had not feared from the first were, by the time he reached young manhood, installed in his mind as fears,—events, people, things. He was afraid of airplanes, yet he knew that in a few years airplanes would become so common that he would be compelled to ride in them. He was afraid of people, yet he must meet them every day—talk with them—the people he was afraid of along with people who bothered him less. He had been afraid of death, and death had come into his family, taking away John, only to make him more afraid, after he had apparently weathered the storm of its passing. In crises, it is true, he seemed to possess no terror, but the terror always existed, even though it was buried too deeply to appear on the surface. When he was apparently the bravest, indeed, he was most afraid. Such had been his fear for the old man with the white horse.

Some of the fears he had had as a child had long since passed away, and he could now laugh at them. There had been a little girl in the past who had given him many of these fears—a little girl with a wide mouth, and long, fair braids tied at the ends with pink ribbons. Her legs had been longer than Peter's, and she used to climb trees faster, like a monkey. There was nothing she did not know, at least that is how she appeared to Peter when he was young and knew no better himself. It was Dorothy who had taught him to

be afraid of the fat women with brown skin who came down his street tugging big bundles that looked like clothes; the dark men who carried suit-cases and spread out beautiful laces for his mother to see. "They are gypsies," Dorothy would say, "Peter, hide under the hammock quick. They are gypsies. They steal children, too." And Peter hid, crouching under the hammock on his stomach until Dorothy said they were out of sight.

Peter had never been afraid of thunder-storms. His father had taken him by the hand to show him how beautiful they were from the window. He had even taught Peter a game to play; told him to count two, three, four between the thunder and lightning. If one counted three the storm was three miles away. And his mother used to tell him that the rolling of the thunder was Zeus scolding the gods upon Olympus, or Rip Van Winkle's dwarves playing at nine pins in the mountains. Peter had never been afraid of it. He loved the twisting snake of the lightning, the fiery slit it tore in the sky. He loved it all until Dorothy taught him to be afraid. "Peter! Peter!" she would scream, "The lightning will kill you, Peter, if you don't come in." Peter had trembled, had become afraid. He had remained so until just lately when he cast aside this fear.

Peter always loved the sea—the salty smell of it, the scallop of the waves curling around his pink toes. The Nova Scotia sea captain's blood in his veins made him love all that until a man carried him out, out to sea on his shoulders against Peter's will. Then Peter had looked down, down into the water that was no longer blue, and he was afraid. Even after he learned to swim, to love the churn of the water around his shoulders he never swam beyond his depth like the other boys because of the fear in his mind which was as all the other fears that seized him in their network when he was off his guard for a moment. A moment ago, for instance, his fear of the old man with the white horse had come to the surface again, as he had never thought it could, after so many, many years. Just the mere sight of a sleigh with an erect old man sitting in it, and driving a white horse, made him turn a corner he had not meant to turn. It was as if he were running away from the past, a fear of that past, which was a fear no longer. Then, suddenly, Peter had stopped

and remembered that he was twenty, not five, and with that consideration the whole story flooded his memory.

He had been five, almost six when the nice old man with the white beard had frightened him. Before that Peter had always given the white horse sugar, and fed him apples. Once, there had been a box of blue dishes for his mother; once a bright red sled for Peter and John. Peter used to run to the door when he heard the old man's voice, "Slow up, Jerry!" Then the old man would clank an anchor-thing down hard on the road to make the horse stop in front of the house. The old man with the white horse reminded Peter of Santa Claus, and he would run to the door when he heard the sound of the heavy anchor falling. He had even gone up to the horse, and had not been afraid to touch its warm nose with his hand. The horse had liked him, and made a long snorting noise deep down in his throat. Sometimes the old man put a cloth bag over Jerry's mouth so he couldn't speak, or make smoke come out of his nose. There was food in that bag, the old man with the white beard told Peter; he said the horse was too busy eating to make smoke.

The old man had been nice like that to Peter until one day he turned ogre in a fairy tale. When Peter trotted to the door, his brown curls nodding up and down on his forehead, Peter's little brother John had tagged at his heels. The old man looked behind Peter and saw John. "Peter," said he, "Who's that?"

"My brother John, sir," Peter spoke reluctantly.

"I'm going to take your little brother away to be my little boy next time I come." Peter noticed that the old man looked hard at John as John began to whimper. John was such a very little boy. He was only four, and still wore rompers. Peter's mother told him to watch out for John because he was so little. So Peter stared back at the old man, who was eyeing John closely. Peter put out his hand for the parcel. "Come on, John." He took John by the hand.

The old man began to laugh aloud. "Next time, Mister Peter, John will be my little boy." Peter saw John screw up his mouth as if he were going to cry. Peter did not tell his mother what the old man had said. Indeed, the next time, he did not go to the door at all. He took John upstairs instead, to hide him under the bed so the gypsy with the horse couldn't steal him. Dorothy said gypsies stole children. This

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man took children to be his own. He must be a gypsy, Peter reasoned.

And when he met the old man on his way to Sunday School—with John trotting behind him on fat, little legs, Peter stood still in front of John until the man was far up the street, turning the corner even with his white horse. This day the old man had not seen Peter, and his heart stopped going up and down inside by the time his mother looked down at him. "Peter, what is the matter?"

Peter pointed his finger up the street. "That man is a gypsy. He is going to steal John the next time he comes with a bundle." Peter saw his mother button her lips together tight.

"Did he tell you that?" Peter nodded. His mouth felt dry inside, and he gulped. "Peter, don't you ever let me hear you say that again. Of course he couldn't steal John, nor would he if he could." Peter looked up the street, then at his mother. Perhaps his mother did not know. He remembered the old man shaking his white beard at him, looking like an ogre at John. His mother said the man *couldn't*, but Peter knew he had a fast horse, if he cracked his whip hard enough. Peter didn't like that old man. His mother glanced at him again, "Will you, Peter?" Peter gulped. "No, Mother." But inside he was afraid. The old man had said he was going to take John, and it never occurred to Peter then that a man would tell a lie to a child for a joke. And long after Peter stopped seeing the old man with the white horse he was afraid.

The old man he had seen today was a gentlemanly old fellow—driving a sleigh. He wore a fur coat and leather gloves. But he had a long, white beard and a white horse. So Peter had turned the corner suddenly when he forgot that he was twenty. Fear was like that. It came upon one suddenly when one saw things, met people. In fact, when he least expected it Peter had fear in his heart—not an abstract, faraway fear, but a close, concrete fear that stole upon him like a ghost—only in the passing became sharply distinct and utterly real. But Peter started back past the corner he had turned—walking fast.

THE DEAD

HELEN PAUL KIRKPATRICK

They say that he is dead. They do not know;
They do not understand what death can be.
They are so blind, his friends, they cannot see
That they died long before they found him so.

I walked the cliffs, and met him there tonight,
Up in the tall sand grass above the sea,
Where he had pointed out the waves to me,
And showed the island carved of salt gray light.

I have his eyes, but their eyes still are blind:
They would see water from the cliff, and sand;
They could not know, and so they could not mind
That he would call it more than sea and land.
And I am sure, though he has died,—they say,
That waves break with his laughter in the bay.

MARS

LUCIA WEIMER

WHAT do you know about Mars?" Strident of voice and flushed of cheek, Gaynor greeted her father at supper time. She had been waiting all afternoon to ask that question; ever since Mr. Bolton had finished telling the class about stars. They were all as big as the earth, he had said, and Mars, some people thought, might be inhabited.

It had come as a blow to Gaynor, who had gotten as far as Junior High School without thinking of the stars as anything more tangible than flowers on the robe of night or diamonds in the hair of the wind. Her mother encouraged her in these conceptions and they made Gaynor feel that the world was a very lovely place. But with a few words this lovely place had become non-existent. In a minute her whole foundation had been swept from her. When she had run out from the dingy school-building into the clear blue autumn afternoon, she had felt like one who, coming back to consciousness, asks "Where am I?" The sky was no longer a pretty blue canopy but a roaring void. There were other worlds as big as this one out in that void. The houses and people around her had looked small—infinitesimal underneath the great million-mile space. She had shuddered and tried to talk about it to the rest but they had only said coolly, "Sure—I guess it's true." and organized a game of "Cops and Robbers."

She had left them and gone inside to look up "Mars" in the Book of Knowledge. Yet when the book was in front of her, she so dreaded the disclosure of some new overwhelming truth that it took all her courage to open it at first. Pictures of trains shooting off into ether in the direction of the various planets gave a reassuring touch of reality to the whole idea. But when she read the labels and discovered that even though they went at the dizzy speed of eighty miles an hour, they could not reach the nearest planet in less than ninety years, she felt herself once more engulfed in uneasiness. The remoteness stood like a wall around her. There

were places that she would never see, *could* never see. No one could ever know what was happening on those worlds out there in the horrid nothingness. Her hands were cold at the thought. But Mars was nearer. She had waited almost hysterically for her father—he would know about Mars.

And so, strident-voiced and flushed, she greeted him with the question, "What do you know about Mars?"

"Nothing much. It's so far away that even through telescopes they can make out nothing but little lines which are probably mountains and rivers. Some people claim it's inhabited although there has never been any evidence to justify it, I think." He stopped and looked suspiciously at her wide eyes and nervous hands. "But why so excited? Come on and eat your dinner and forget it."


Playing tag on the lawn afterwards, she could not shake off the oppression of space that had fallen on her. Everything seemed miniature; the voices of the children sounded thin and tinkling as though dissipated in eternal atmosphere; and when the light of the stars began to pierce the gray haze of the late summer evening, she shivered and went inside.

Even in bed she could not sleep but lay feverishly trying to conceive of space—space with worlds, billions of worlds separated from each other by billions of miles—billions of years. There was no end to it all. When she thought she had come to the end she realized in terror that there must be something beyond that. An awful vastness surrounded her. It was like the silence following the blast of a trumpet. She had a sudden fear of falling into this vastness—falling—falling for ever. And she clutched her bed. But she would not fall. There was gravity,—gravity which held her tight. She was clinging like an insect to a revolving mass. Out in that awful space other worlds were revolving too. A crazy endless whirling of thousands—millions—billions of worlds. All turning—turning—white shining spirals. And she was alone in the middle. All alone in this mad frenzied twirling. Softly, "Mother" she said. Then, "Mother" she shrieked. And sobbing in her mother's arms, "Hold me—O hold me!"



EDITORIAL



T was said to us that in the spring people may be divided into three classes: those who have new clothes, those that wish they had, and those who are just going to get some. Yes, that is quite true and we know perfectly well which class we should like to belong to; but is there not, perhaps, a more important distinction to be made among those who wander or ride about in the spring? We should divide them into those who make worn-out remarks and those who listen to them. The ratio is easily twenty of the first to one of the second. It has come to such a point already that when someone starts to mutter convulsively, "In the spring a young m—" we take pity on Tennyson and ourselves to interrupt hastily, "Oh, yes, *lovely* day, isn't it? Where did you say he went?" Sadder than she with no new clothes is she that lacks a confidante in the spring. And there are perforce many of them.

One of the saddest cases was that of a Dong—do you remember Edward Lear and your Nonsense Book? He had an unhappy affair with a Jumbly Girl and instead of flocking to hear his sad tale, whenever he went by all the neighbours merely stuck their heads out of their windows and said coolly, dispassionately, (and very likely disagreeably):

"He goes,

"He goes,

"The Dong with the luminous nose."

That is no way to treat anyone, least of all a Dong who was disappointed in love but who still went (somewhere), and who still kept his nose luminous and with it doubtless hope. Of course, if they had stopped him and asked him sympathetic questions he would probably have begun in a mournful tone, "In the spring a young Dong's fancy—" And they would have gone off and left him but he would have been much happier.

Monthly has had no sad love affair, perhaps she thought once—but no, it was not to be. She is an unromantic maiden. Nevertheless she often feels that she has much in common with the Dong. She tries very hard with her luminous nose. Fuel may run short but she endeavours to keep a bright light though it may be small,

“All swathed about with a bandage stout,

“To keep the wind from blowing it out.”

And Northampton is a very windy place.

Monthly may get some new clothes in the spring, but new clothes are far from being an unmixed blessing; new shoes are less confident, they often slip and may not fit. But like the Dong she likes attention. “In the spring the Monthly’s fancy—”? Perhaps. But then, the Dong may have had something very interesting to say, and we are sure he hated having people merely remark:

“He goes,

“He goes,

“The Dong with the luminous nose.”

He wanted attention and interest.



BOOK REVIEWS



THE BISHOP MURDER CASE

BY S. S. VAN DINE

Since detective stories have reached their present pinnacle of perfection, they have been stamped with the approval of all those whose brains, weary of abstruse problems, turn in relief to the lesser complicated questions of "who stole the revolver?", "where is the missing necklace?" and most important of all, "who did it?"

Scientists and bankers devour mystery stories, and college professors, we have lately been informed, are kept in touch with sanity by the nightly solution of criminal cases. For the mind burdened down with too much work, and the spirit crushed under the usual number of Spring papers we know no better release than the latest triumph of that erudite amateur detective Philo Vance. His triumph is spectacular, his progress towards the denouement not a steady plodding advance, but made up of checks and successes in a most realistic manner. Not only does S. S. Van Dine baffle the reader completely until the very end of the book is reached, but to the mystification of the reader by legitimate mystery story methods he adds a kind of cultural element, to soothe the more intelligent of his readers, and no doubt to complete the bewilderment of the average peruser of detective stories.

For those who are tired of the *crime passionnel*, or the murders of the white-haired savant in the oak-panelled library, or the cold-blooded slaughter of three maiden ladies in a rickety house on Lonely Point, we advise this crime that takes place in the higher realm of pure mathematics. It is true that there are a few of the well-known figures of the detective story, but there are also a great many new ones. You

may find the familiar butler with yellow face and twitching fingers, but you will also discover references to Eddington, Einstein and tensorial calculus. You may greet the literal minded detective from headquarters as an old friend, but you will surely be startled by seeing names such as Georgia O'Keefe and "Die Meistersinger" in such a context.

For the person bored with the crimes committed in utter contradiction of all Psychology "The Bishop Murder Case" will prove an excellent excursion into abnormal psychology. Let whoever scorns the detective story as too easy and simple for his consumption, attack a chapter called "Mathematics and Murder", where he will find material to occupy his mind for some time.

The fault of the book rests more or less in spoiling the taste for simpler, less theoretical, and more easily worked out detective stories. If Philo Vance, and one is tempted to suspect Philo Vance of being the incarnation of S. S. Van Dine as he would like to be, keeps on with his series of remarkable discoveries, the tone of this type of writing will change, will become more philosophic, subjective and involved. The form of fiction which has become an escape, a release for over-worked brains, will alter until only the most highly-trained and indefatigable minds will dare to open the covers of a "murder case" and plunge bravely in at the first page, to struggle out at the last, exhausted not only from contending with an assassin, but also with "space-time", the quantum theory, and modern art.

P. S. F.

THE AMENITIES OF BOOK COLLECTING

By A. EDWARD NEWTON

The most satisfactory thing in the world is to discover something with which nobody else is acquainted and then to have the fun of introducing this something, whether it be a person, a book, or a vegetable to one's friends. But this is a rare pleasure and most of us must be content with the next best thing, an introduction to that same person, book, or vegetable through the medium of some friend whose judgment we trust. Accordingly I would like to thank a certain Mr. Washburn from Boston many times for his enthusiasm

over *The Amenities of Book Collecting*. About four years ago, one evening, we were talking about books and people and Mr. Washburn was speaking of Ellery Sedgwick with whom he roomed in college and through whom he had met Mr. A. Edward Newton. At once he asked me if I had read *The Amenities*; I replied that I had not, so he promised to send me a copy. Within a few days the book arrived, and since my first hurried perusal, at which my interest was immediately aroused, as the book is beautifully illustrated with prints and facsimiles, I have read and reread it many times.

I have often heard popular science condemned on the grounds that it attempts to educate people to an understanding of Einstein, to take an extreme example, who have not learnt the principles of Newton. This argument might be applied to the writing of popular books on book collecting for people who have never read a catalogue and who are only vaguely suspicious of what a binding "in boards" might be. But the analogy is slight and falls to pieces when the subject is considered. It would be almost impossible to write an informal essay on Motion, for instance,; the essay might be popular in the sense that scientific terms were carefully explained and that the most easily recognizable illustrations were used, but in nature it would be technical. An essay on book collecting, on the other hand, makes a most delightful excuse for an informal essay and one which affords a wide field for digression. It may be technical in so far as it discusses the fine points of binding, printing, etc., but its nature is informal.

In *The Amenities of Book Collecting*, Mr. Newton has included not only a discussion of certain of his favorite books and authors, but has also brought in all his best friends and casual acquaintances with a hundred ramifications thereof. He writes a chapter on Association Books, and this word "association" gives the keynote to his whole book, for *The Amenities* is, properly speaking, a description of the sympathetic bond existing between Mr. Newton and his tastes. Nothing irrelevant is introduced; by irrelevant I mean unrelated to Mr. Newton. Dr. Johnson, one feels, must have been in a direct line of spiritual descent with Newton, while Trollope was more recently adopted by him.

Literary criticism does not intrude itself; "the hard facts of the emotions" seem to be the only criteria by which

Mr. Newton praises or condemns. And yet his likes and dislikes are fairly contagious and it is almost impossible to close the book without being convinced that there must be something fundamentally noble in the man who enjoys Johnson.

Mr. Newton gathers to himself a motley collection of authors; William Godwin, Blake, Oscar Wilde, Boswell, Lamb and others, in all of whom he finds something congenial. What does it matter if Mr. Newton makes himself the center of this little grouping and if their genius appears to shine only in the reflected light of his own personal appreciation! He describes his characters so charmingly and seems to take such a huge pleasure in the telling of little incidents in connection with them, that we enjoy the situation all the more. As a matter of fact, this is very flattering for Mr. Newton with great scorn excludes from the inner circle all those who cannot share his tastes, thereby striking the unconscious reader in a most vital spot, for it is somehow gratifying to know that you and Mr. Newton agree regardless of the opinion of the whole rest of the world.

This leads us to a consideration of the conceit in A. Edward Newton. It must be admitted that in his writings he is frankly conceited and it follows that he is even patronizing. He invariably speaks of such and such an eminent person as "my very good friend, Mr. So-and so" in a manner which leaves no doubt in one's mind as to the value of Mr. Newton's friendship. He has rather an offensive way of speaking of the superiority of everything English to everything American. And yet this conceit, it seems to me, is perfectly natural and altogether likeable. It is difficult not to become pedantic in writing or talking about any one thing in which one is tremendously interested. There is a bit of the pedant in all of us which, unless it become unduly exaggerated, is no more than a natural pride. In talking about one's books, this tendency simply cannot be suppressed, nor would it be admirable to do so. In *The Amenities*, Mr. Newton is addressing those who love books and who have supposedly this same pedantic quality in more or less degree. His conceit adds a flavor to the account of his failures and successes in the book collecting game and its retraction would be a decided loss to the personality of the book.

Eleanor S. Atterbury.

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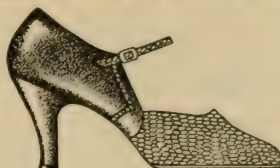
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SMITH COLLEGE

Monthly

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EXTREMITIES

MYRTLE BRADY

 O judge people by their legs is doubtless immediately to be damned as being dogmatic or whimsical, and these attributes are, possibly, two of the least sought after in the world today. Yet something may be said for them: nay more, something should be said and I have half a mind to take up their defense instead of pursuing the subject which has been suggested by the grand opening infinitive phrase. (See above.) But, childishly, I am forever defending that which is popularly scorned (I enjoy seeing the wondering, incredulous stare in my opponents' eyes and their faces growing a dull belligerent red), so that if I continue so, I fear people will no longer take me seriously—an attitude which I have long apprehended. Therefore it would on the whole be a better thing if I were to adhere to my original plan, laying aside all extraneous considerations of dogmatism and whimsicality. We are now back to judging people by their legs and I can tell by your expressions that any further digressions will not be welcome. But there; no sooner do you decide to write an informal essay than some one instantly loses the spirit of the thing and insists on a formal interpretation and the title which proclaims your work as being "On" such and such a thing. If I were to give my efforts such a name it would be sheer deception of the public and as such to be assiduously avoided.

However, it happened that yesterday when I had parted from a casual friend whom I had considered making something more than casual, I paused a moment and idly

watched her figure go down the hill. A good head, a nice back, broad hips of the extremely potential mother, quarters sloping smoothly enough. I smiled, unconsciously pleased, and then something told me to look a little lower. My eyes dropped too quickly to her calves and the swiftness of their descent made me realize more than the sight itself that my friend lacked the goodly sweep of thigh which other friends of mine have always had. In the twinkling of an eye, her thigh had become a calf and I did not like it in the least. It worried me and I thought twice before I permitted myself to measure the distance from the calf to the ground. It was as I feared. My eye, jaundiced perhaps by this sudden disillusionment, saw that if it had not been for that big heavy treading foot, nothing would have stopped that calf from being at one with Mother Earth. The notion did not please me, but as yet I could not turn away. I became fascinated by the indomitable motion of her legs as they propelled her body surely towards her next class. She would get there all right, all right. Nothing would stop *her*. No. I forced myself to turn away for I began to feel a little sick.

Later in the agreeable legless desert of my room I thought it all out. I knew then that my friend's thoughts, which I had hitherto considered as particularly appealing, were nothing but a defense mechanism provided for her by nature suddenly embarrassed at turning out another baldly businesslike personality. And then, I proceeded to defend myself: no, certainly, I had not been gullible throughout the apprenticeship of our acquaintance,—credulous, yes, but not gullible. Surely I always realized that when she tried to place herself at an angle other than right to the earth, it was almost impossible for her—and if by dint of sheer will-power she succeeded for an imperceptible space of time, she always came back to normal like one of those small toy dolls which cannot be upset because of their round weighted bottoms. I never really saw her drift gracefully even at an angle of seventy-five degrees. Always she would topple back, yet talking frantically to maintain the illusion that she was still a little foreign to this planet. And what was it that kept her from escaping? Of course, her rounded weighty legs. They forced her back inevitably; her trunk might bend and pull and her head toss wildly but she would be rendered only the more ridiculous by her struggles. She

was indigenous to the soil and I must always have known it. Except that now I knew why.

In spite of all this, I have never considered myself a stickler for beautiful legs. (If I were, I would be miserable all day long). A "well-turned" ankle does not move me to rapture, in fact I have always thought them rather lewd looking, but that may immediately be laid up to jealousy and middle-class morality. But I know that no one, whose leg is as well-grounded as that of my former friend can ever claim a corner in this heart. Bow-legged people, thick-ankled people, even people over at the knees, yes I have rarely found fault with any of these. It is true that I have never had the pleasure of seeing some of them soar above me in the surrounding ether, but if that be the case, it is because they have not tried. They have not pretended and thus they have not been betrayed by their legs as my friend had been by hers.

Have I been dogmatic or whimsical? God grant that I have. For without dogmatism there is much which is soul-destroying and without whimsicality there is the "true sense of humor" which leads to practical joking with intense physical discomfort in its wake. These are not for me. Rather let me force upon my audience ultra obscurantist teachings with some show of fire in my eyes than lie scarcely breathing somewhere in the underbrush of lethargy; rather suffer me to commit a gently whimsical act, or to tell a faintly whimsical story than pour a pail of water onto the head of the person on the street below. But refrain from directing toward me the finger of Freud.

MISSIONARY


ALINE WECHSLER

You grovel low to Ikabod,
That puny, sightless, wooden god,
And as an antidote for vice,
You cast a cautious sacrifice
Unheeded, at his rotting feet—
Your prayers are honeyed and discreet,
But Ikabod-of-wooden-ear,
Ikabod will never hear.

Come and worship Hetsakai
Keen of ear and cold of eye,
Lofty in a temple where
Sinners supplicate in prayer,
Pompous in his robes of state,
Richly brodered and sedate.
Hetsakai wil grant you aid,—
He is carven out of jade.

ENTERTAINMENT

ELLEN E. ROBINSON

HE moon had just risen and stared down with unashamed curiosity at the group of buildings in the center of the woods—at the three-story hotel with its porches one above the other in front and in back, the commissary with its high steps, and the few small unpainted houses. Barely fifty people and yet the surveyors' map called the clearing "London".

"And we'll be having a chamber of commerce yet," said Jim Woods, the proprietor of the hotel and the owner of the commissary. He shifted his weight on the steps of the commissary. "Some day we will be the queen city of Alabama. And I'll live to see it, too."

There were ten young engineers on the top floor of the hotel—thin, laughing men from Eastern colleges. They slept in two large rooms and, if they had not been exhausted every night at nine-thirty, they would have been a noisy lot. Noisy enough on Sunday mornings as it was! Then there were three married engineers and the superintendent and his wife, who all lived in the poor little houses built on stilts. They pretended to a certain home life, but they returned to the hotel for Sunday dinner.

Donald McInness and his wife, Caroline, still lived at the hotel, but their house had been going up for four months.

"Anybody would think," Donald said, "that it was a *house* we were asking for. How those niggers can waste all this time with a few boards and a little plaster . . ."

"I don't mind so much, Don dear. You know I told you I can't cook much."

"Cook! Didn't I tell you that you could have just as many niggers as you want. Five of them. Ten of them. . ."

"I know, dear—but there aren't any cooks. And the other women say it's best—"

"But, darling, I don't want you—"

"Oh, I'll like it." Her mind flashed back over these six months. She saw their arrival at the hotel; everybody had dressed up for them. The women were open-mouthed

at the magnificence of her going-away suit. Their room—very small, but full of finery lent for the occasion.

"The bridal suite," Jim Woods called it as he opened the door for them. A blast of pink from the bed—that was Mrs. Howell's best spread; a flaming dragon writhing over a bit of painted glass—that was the shade on Mrs. Edwards' lamp; a small wicker chair donated by Jim Woods himself. ("I ain't been able to get into it since 1909. You might as well keep it.") It was the only chair in the room and a great satin cushion—piercingly yellow—filled it completely.

She had come down to breakfast the next morning in light blue silk with a wide pleated ruffle about the neck. Josy the waitress stared at her, rolling her eyes, and dropped a plate of biscuits.

But Caroline learned. She bought some gingham at the commissary and sewed up on the second floor porch with Anetta Woods, Jim's daughter and the only unmarried white woman in a radius of twenty-five miles. They sewed all day long; there was nothing else to do; even walking was forbidden them. ("Bad niggers hiding in these woods, dear. I think I'll get a shot-gun soon.") They made gingham dresses for themselves, and for all the servants, gingham curtains, gingham bed-spreads, and gingham shirts for the men. It was a single-thread machine and Caroline was slow in learning. Donald was eloquent over the first shirt she made him, but he came home with the collar off, and the next day with a sleeve out. "I just pulled a little thread, dear. I'm awfully sorry."

She thought of the wedding notices in the papers back home. "Mr. and Mrs. McInness will be at home on October 14th in London, Alabama." And she thought of all those calling cards buried in one of the trunks—down underneath the chiffon negligee, the rose taffeta evening-dress, and Donald's dress-suit.

It was Saturday night—and late. The hotel dance was over. Caroline sat out on the steps of the porch, waiting for Donald, who had been called over to the negro settlement near the mine to set a broken leg. Another fight. More whiskey. More razors. She was used to Donald's being called away on Saturday nights; and he rather liked it, being one of those men whose great regret is that they did not study medicine.

She thought she could still hear the victrola in the dining room, though the windows were black. Leaning her head against an unpainted post, she thought lazily of the dance. Dance! Ten couples—no, five couples and ten extra men. Quite an ideal arrangement in a way. They had made Donald and her do their stunt again. That silly vaudeville thing—she yodelling and he clogging. Not very good—but it was fun doing it for these people. And just as much appreciation as on the night of their first nervous performance.

The moon hung just over the edge of the woods—smug, safe, with a sudden fearful prominence when the clouds left it entirely free. The edge of the woods was a sharp semi-circle before her and the lower parts of the trees were visible, unobscured by any underbrush except the fitful clumps of berry bushes. She followed a path with her eyes; it was the same dull red as the mud at the foot of the hotel steps. The lights of the houses went out one by one. Underneath the hotel she could hear the grunting of pigs, still content with the garbage thrown over the back-porch after supper. Far off, directly under the moon, it seemed, a whippoorwill cried—and suddenly it was as though he cried within her.

The moon poked maliciously between the trees and a breath of mist rose reluctantly, standing ghost-like in the clearings between the berry bushes, or clinging low and close to the tree trunks, with a tortured immobility. Then a slight breeze, and the earthly mist mocked the heavy clouds now tumbling about the moon.

Caroline looked up. A tall, thin negro stood at the bottom of the steps. His lips bulged out from his face and seemed to be swelling rapidly. He wore brown and white checked trousers—high on his ankles and tight—and an old red-velvet smoking jacket, almost maroon in the moonlight. He leaned toward her and she saw a long pinkish scar on the top of his head—ridiculously like the path in the woods. Half the back of the smoking jacket hung in a three-cornered tear.

"Mis Minnus, I'm Jeff'son Shakespeare. Yo' husband he say he want yo' should come help him. They's havin a baby an' Mr. Minnus he say come quick."

She was down the steps in a moment. How exciting!

Donald and she helping these people. Donald calling on her. Something to do at last. She didn't know much, but at least she could boil water or pour out medicine or something. She hurried to the path in the woods, Jefferson a little ahead of her.

It wasn't a path after all, but a road. Jefferson fell to the rear and they walked in silence. Sometimes a damp bit of mud made her slip. Always before her in the distance was a wall of mist—just on the next curve of the road. But when they reached the curve the wall was further on and only a few still puffs were left on the ground. She thought it was the same road she and Donald had walked one Sunday morning, when he had taken her to see the shafts. But Jefferson said Donald had left the settlement and gone further on, the other side of the mine.

She walked on, watching her feet and thinking that she would have to get Donald to take her into Birmingham soon. New shoes, for one thing. Perhaps they could go to a movie. Her first movie in six months!—"Mr. and Mrs. McInness will be at home in London, Alabama." She laughed a little. Jefferson thought she had spoken and came abreast of her for a moment.

"No, nothing . . . but is it much further?"

"In some ways it ain't, Mis' Minnus, an' in some ways t'is."

The fog reached above her head now. Only the road was clear of it, but at the sides the grey masses menaced her. She could see no moon and yet a light came from somewhere and struggled with the motionless grey walls.

It had been foggy like this the third time she met Donald—no, the fourth time. At a subway entrance. He had a paper under his arm and an overcoat too large for him. A horse had pushed his head suddenly at them through the fog. And they had laughed at his mournful eyes.

Jefferson was a little nearer. He evidently felt the need of conversation and began to tell her of a haunted mine near them over to the left. A cow had fallen into the old shaft and died. Three nights later Jefferson and his friends came by and the ghost of the cow—white and terrible—pursued them. Half-way through his story she remembered that two of the engineers had run off with one of the hotel

sheets and had come back covered with mud and mooring ecstatically at each other.

Jefferson now walked parallel to her but a few feet away. She asked again if they were almost there and he made no answer. The fog now surrounded them but always at a distance of five or six feet. Jefferson seemed to know the road well and took the turnings instinctively. The light had grown dimmer and she could see only his great lips and the whites of his eyes as he glanced sideways into the woods—or, rather, where the woods must be, swallowed up in the fog.

She was tired but she hurried more and more. It seemed as though she had been walking all her life along this road, slipping a little, her shoes gradually heavy with mud, her voile skirt limp and clinging. The fog was close about her; she wanted to push through it with her hands. It pressed against her—against the front of her and all about her ears. She almost heard the noise of its advance—a rumbling. Or was it just the silence that rumbled? What was noise? What was silence? What was tangible and what was intangible?

Jefferson was a little ahead. She kept close to him, her eyes on the tear in his coat, through which his black skin glistened a little. Once she stepped on his heel. He said, "Scuse me, Mis' Minnus." And his voice was thunder, resounding back behind the grey walls and rolling along the ground beneath.

Her throat was thick and rough. She wanted to speak but she was afraid somehow to make herself known to this creeping greyness. Her hair twisted beseechingly across her face and when she pushed it aside it was heavy and wet.

Jefferson was hardly visible. She listened for the faint *squush* of his feet down somewhere in the fog. How far down? Miles perhaps.

She had ceased to think. Her mind was grey and damp and thick. In all the world there was nothing but the *squush squush* of Jefferson's feet. And her listening became so intent that she lost her sense of herself—and of everything. It was as though she were prone on the ground—listening.

A blurred light struggled off to the right. She felt that it must have been there all the time, but that she had somehow just seen it.

"Here we are, Mis' Minnus," said Jefferson. Some where there was a sound of clapping hands and stamping feet and the music of a bad violin.

The wall of a house stepped up to them quietly. A door opened and they were inside a lighted room.

The clapping and stamping stopped and the violin gave one last tortured note. A crowd of negroes parted and Jefferson walked through them to the center of the room. Caroline followed him, her eyes still on the three-cornered tear.

Jefferson turned and pointed toward her with his open hand. She stared at the huge pink palm.

"Here she is," he boomed. They all looked at her. The attention of a mass of dark shining faces—hundreds of them, she thought.

A short fat woman in blue calico lumbered up to her. "Mis' Minnus, we's been havin' a pahty an' we thought as how you-all might come an' make yo' noise for us. Jeff'son done said yo' do it mighty wunnerful." Caroline looked at her; the black folds under her chin flapped a little.

Jefferson came up, "Y'know, Mis' Minnus, like yo' done it at the hotel eb-ry Sa'day night. That pretty noise—sort of way up high like."

A heavy grey curtain went up slowly in the back of her head. Where was she? Out alone in the Black Belt—not another white person—the great black muscles of these men—what did they want? Where was Donald?

"Aw, Mis' Minnus, like yo' done at the dance tonight."

Dance! Was that tonight, only a few hours ago? She and Donald in a stunt. Something silly. Her yodelling—

Oh, that was what they wanted. Yodelling. She would have to do it. Poor things! Only children really. But such a long walk. Where was Donald?

She turned to Jefferson and nodded her head. He nodded to all the others and they seemed to sigh a little—and waited. She cleared her throat and lifted up her head to sing.

She finished. They were motionless. She took their silence for appreciation and sang again. And a third time. Then she was tired and looked at Jefferson.

He turned abruptly and went to the door. She followed him. The crowd moved slowly together again, smil-

ing at her. An old man tuned a violin thoughtfully. The door shut and she could hear the slow stamping and a dull measured clapping. Great pink palms. . .

The fog squeezed about the house. Jefferson found the road and taking hold of his coat she followed him. Once she shut her eyes and the greyness pushed at her lids until she opened them in defence.

There was no sound. There was nothing. Only this greyness and a bit of red velvet in her hand.

SOUTHWARD

FRANCES ROBINSON

Morning

Snowflakes
Powdering down the air
With soft insistence
Blot out the smoke-covered walls,
Narrowing the world to us,
While the engine stands,
Black and impatient;
And your last kiss
Touches my lips as lightly as the snow.


Evening

Cherry blossoms
Loosened by the nimble fingered breeze,
Fall, as the evening falls,
Slowly and restfully,
Sounding full tones on the southern night air.

The harmony will remain unbroken;
I will return—
The petals will be fashioned back to snowflakes
Falling on you
From the magic that is over us,
For there's a charm that's flung about the day
Feathering it in.

THE PRINCESS WHO WANTED THE MOON

ALINE WECHSLER

HE little princess lived in a marble palace built high upon a clipped green lawn on which cedar trees were planted in well-spaced rows. It was entirely surrounded by a lake whereon swans floated lazily and miniature boats spread their silken sails in the breezes. This was the princess' kingdom, and as far as she was concerned, the boundaries of the lake were the farthest corners of the world. Here she lived, surrounded by her prime minister, seven ladies-in-waiting, and a little page who stood respectfully beside her throne, when the princess was pleased to sit there, and ran errands for the ladies-in-waiting. Every week the court magician was summoned before the princess to devise new games and toys for the amusement of her highness, and she played with these for a few hours and then threw them listlessly aside. The truth of the matter is that she was bored.

One night as she was standing on the terrace, leaning over the balustrade and looking out into the night, she noticed a crescent-shaped piece of silver suspended from a wisp of nothing in the dark heavens. She clapped her hands and the little page appeared, with a waxen taper in his hand. The princess pointed upward to the roof of the sky.

"What is that?" she asked. "That shining thing up there? Do you think it is made of crystal, white gold or diamonds?"

"Why, your highness," said the little page, "that is the moon, and none can say of what it is made, for none has ever reached it, for all that men have tried."

"It is very pretty," observed the princess. "It looks like a tiara, or a strange, shining comb. I think I would like to have it to wear in my hair. Do you think it would look nice?"

"Beautiful, your highness!" said the page. "Your hair would be the brilliance of the sun, enhanced by the chill splendor of the moon. It would be—lovely! But I am

afraid that the sun will have to shine alone, for the moon is inaccessible and none may ever reach it."

"I am not like other people," said the princess, "Some day I will be a queen, and kings and queens may do as they please."

"Even kings and queens have aspired to the moon," said the page. "And none has ever reached it."

"How dare you!" said the princess. "Send for the magician and the prime minister at once."

The magician and the prime minister were wakened and brought before the little princess.

"I would like to have the moon," she said. "There is nothing else in the whole world that can satisfy me. I must have the moon. Bring it to me tomorrow at midnight."

"But, your highness,—" said the magician and the prime minister with one voice. The princess, however, had already swept past them into the palace, her royal nose tilted high; and they were left alone.

"If we do not procure her the moon," said the prime minister somberly "we will be decapitated in the morning."

"Horrors!" said the magician. "There is only the faintest glimmer of a hope,—but I will see what can be done."

He brewed a potion in a silver kettle, muttering gloomily, and walking around in circles as he did so. The kettle began to sing and moan, and at last a voice was heard, escaping in the thin clouds of steam that exuded from the cauldron.

"I am the spirit of night," said the voice. "What is it you wish of me? Speak!"

"Our princess desires the moon for a prize," faltered the magician. "She is not to be dissuaded!"

All was silent for a long time.

The voice said, "The moon is avid of human souls. She crushes them until they are limp and useless and then tosses them back to their owners. Perhaps, with the offer of a soul or two, she could be persuaded . . . just for one night. I know of no other way . . ."

The voice faded and receded until it was one with the heavy silence of the black sky,—and the magician and the prime minister looked at each other. The prime minister blew a silver whistle and in a moment, the whole court was

assembled, the seven ladies-in-waiting with their heads bobbing in neat curl papers, and the little page still holding his waxen taper.

The prime minister cleared his throat. "Ahem," he began impressively. "Her highness, the most illustrious princess Bramble, has commanded that the moon be brought to her tomorrow at midnight."

A little flutter from the direction of the ladies-in-waiting.

"And," continued the prime minister, "The only way in which the moon may be procured is with the offering of a human soul. Which of you will give his soul, that the princess may play with the moon?"

"Not I," said the first lady-in-waiting. "Nor I," echoed the second and third and fourth.

"I would gladly offer my own," said the prime minister, "but unfortunately, we men of affairs must retain our souls. They are invaluable in matters of state. And the magician here sold his to a black witch, many years ago. . . Will none of you give his soul? No one? . . ."

"I will," said the little page, and he handed it to the magician.

The magician took the soul of the little page in his hand and whispered softly to it. Then he flung his hand upward and the soul departed on its journey to the moon. The court retired for the second time that night, all but the little page who sat down with his back to the door of the room where the princess slept and kept solitary watch throughout the night.

The next evening there was great commotion in the court. It had become known that the princess was to be presented with the moon, sharp at the hour of midnight. The little princess was clothed in a dress tinted the warm golden shades of the sun; her eyes were bright and her hair the color of honey. She sat upon her throne, the little page standing by her side as usual, and waited for the long minutes to pass . . . At last the clock struck, slowly, one. . . . two three four and so on, until finally, twelve! A dread hush, then a little whirring sound, and a silver package dropped into the lap of the princess. She unfastened it eagerly, with trembling fingers, the ladies-in-

waiting crowding around her. At last it was opened and the princess held it up for all to see.

"It is very pretty," said the ladies-in-waiting politely.

The princess hugged it to her, and then she looked at it for the first time. Suddenly she stood up, her eyes blazing, her little fists clenched with rage.

"How dare you, how dare you!" she cried to the whole court. "I will have all your heads cut off in the morning! How dare you humiliate me in such a manner!" And she threw the package on the ground before her.

The moon was nothing but a piece of green cheese.

The package rolled down the carpeted steps of the throne, and a white substance, limp and inert, dropped at the feet of the little page. Nobody noticed it, lying there, crumpled and forlorn. Not even the little page could recognize it. It was nothing but his soul, lifeless and still, returned by the moon when she had crushed it to death.

RAIN MUST DROP GENTLY

MARY PAXTON MACATEE

The rain must drop quite gently on the pond,
Or else it will crack open with its blows
The brittle net of sunlight flung across
This sullen water where a greyness flows.

Rain must not pierce too deeply to its heart.
This little shower will not break the seal
That holds the water calm, and gives it still
A loveliness, because it seems unreal.

The sun is drowned within a lake of clouds,
But all day long it had a chance to make
The gossamer of sheen upon the pond,
To spread the fragile light no rain must break.

WHITE INSTANT

LUCIA WEIMER



didn't answer Daphne's first letter. It was scrawled in her large, rather bold handwriting on fragile crested notepaper and said something like—"So Philip, it seems, has discovered this castle on whose grounds, they say, a unicorn disports itself. Of course there was nothing for it but that he rent it for the Spring months and we are to have unicorn hunts and things. Do drop in some week-end and help."

I remember throwing the letter in the waste basket. Although I had known her and played big brother to her ever since we were children, I had little sympathy with her chic whimsies and less inclination to set forth for the wilds of Northern England. I felt that unicorn hunts could hold for me only the intense boredom which characterized her too well-remembered week-end parties. So I threw the letter away.

She followed it up, however, a month later with another note—very short this time. "Please come up. It is lonely and I want to talk to you," she said. The tone of the note, so different from her usual hard flippancies, worried me. After all I felt a certain responsibility for her—if she really was depressed up there—. I packed my bag and—in sentimental willingness even to hunt unicorns if it would please her—my guns and left.

She met me at the station in the car. "Philip is at home. I told him not to bother," she explained. A yellow felt hat drooped around her face so that I could not see much of it, but I felt somehow that she was not looking well. Her hands on the wheel were thin and milky.

"I say, Daphne," I began, "if this place is getting on your nerves why stay? Don't tell me Philip is still crazy on this unicorn idea?"

"Oh—it's not Philip," she told me impatiently, "he wanted to leave long ago. It is I who insist upon staying. There's something—But I want you to see it for yourself, Jim."

A little later we turned in a stone gateway. At our right was a stretch of green-gold woodland and in front of us the castle rose against the sea. It was beautiful and removed—"Like fairyland", I whispered.

The normal sound of Daphne's voice came sudden and strident like the shriek of a locomotive on a summer night. "A terrace runs down to the sea," she said. Then dreamily, "So very lovely it is."

I looked at her sharply. It was not like Daphne—this gentleness. Another pose perhaps? But she was not given to posing for my benefit. Always we had retained that casual frankness of our childhood days.

Philip was waiting for us on the terrace. I liked to look at Philip, for he was tall and fit—the kind of man whose picture the papers published bob-sledding at St. Moritz.

"Good to see your face again, Jim," he said. And then, with the pleasant laugh lines crinkling about his eyes, "Sorry I can't say as much to my wife."

Daphne laughed and swept off the hat. I had not noticed until then how badly she looked—or maybe it was just different. At any rate her mouth, usually red and satiric, was now a sweet streak of pale rose and her flat vivid blue eyes had faded to a translucent aquamarine. Her voice cut through my dismay. "Dinner is at seven-thirty. See you then. You two have a talk."

She was gone and I turned to Philip. "Daphne's looking awfully shot."

His good-looking face clouded. "I know it, Jim. It's this place. But I can't seem to do anything about it. Can't get her to leave. God knows I wish we had never come. It's all that damned unicorn too. She thinks she hears it. And," he laughed a little embarrassedly, "there is something. Hear it myself. Probably a stag. But this loneliness is getting on my nerves."

I was surprised that a man as healthy and phlegmatic as Philip had always seemed to be should allow himself to be worked up to the state where he was half ready to credit a unicorn, but something happened as we were sitting over our coffee after dinner that made me understand. A silence had fallen—one of those lulls in the conversation—when through the stillness there sounded a crashing and then a kind of musical snort—like nothing so much as a sweet

klaxon. Daphne sprang to her feet and stood there trembling, her face dead white against her ash-blond hair. I stood too. The sound had given me the curious feeling that I must go and get something that I had forgotten. And then I looked at Daphne with her hands trembling faintly against the white mist of her dress and suddenly I knew she was connected with it all. It was something that Daphne and I could find together. I felt that if only I could hear the sound again I could remember—remember— —. It was like waking up in the night and knowing nothing—trying to force facts from blackness.

And then it had passed and Philip was talking to us irritably. "What has gotten into you two? A deer crackles a little underbrush and you go into trances about it." He reached out calmly enough for his coffee but I noticed his hand trembled.

I talked to Daphne about it the next day—a strangely different Daphne with a small white face and nervous hands.

"I'm glad you feel the same way, Jim," she told me, "I keep thinking that it is something very important and that if we could see the unicorn—I'm sure that's what it is, aren't you?—it would all be so clear—so clear."

One night not long after this it happened. Philip had gone to his room early and Daphne and I sat talking on the terrace. There was a moon lighting the sky to ultramarine and sifting silver on the trees. The lawn spread out before us, a lush midnight blue. Daphne lay flung on her chair, the silver on her white dress sparkling faintly. Shadows rippled across the pallid surface of her face. She was as I had never known her to be before—lovely—quiet—glamorous—. "Daphne—Daphne—" I said.

A shrill melodious neigh startled the night. Daphne slipped to her feet. Her pale hair was a silver casque on her head. "Come," she said, "Oh come—before it is too late."

Like two children we ran hand in hand across the lawn into the woods. How long or how far we ran, I don't know. There were crashes and we followed them. And then before us in a pale blue clearing stood the unicorn. He was white as milk and his horn gleamed silver under the moon. In the soft stillness I knew everything. I turned to Daphne and found her looking at me—all white as any blossom on a tree. She knew too. And then a shot tore

through the blue and silver haze and the unicorn fell. Daphne's voice shrieked thinly across miles to me—"All my loue I doe thee giue. Yea and your leman for to be," and then everything went back. The next thing I remember is Philip crawling through the bushes disheveled and apologetic.

"Jove—it *was* a unicorn. But it was upsetting you so Daphne, dear,"—this last to a strange and silent Daphne who sat wanly near the spill of white.

When he picked her up in his arms she did not speak and he carried her into the house.

The next morning the unicorn was gone. I like to think that it melted into moonlight. At any rate it was gone and so was the precious knowledge it had brought me. All that remained was that strange sentence of Daphne's—the sentence which made me think that perhaps she might remember, that it at least might serve as a key to make her remember.

I had to leave the next day and she was ill for a long time after so that it was a year before I saw her again. It was at the Lido—and although I had rather dwelt on the idea of talking it over with her—when I saw her I changed my mind. She had red and blue beach pyjamas on and she was running, her golden head like a fiery comet against the blue sky. Philip and some men ran after her and when they came within a few feet of her she stopped and turned. Her eyes blazed blue and her mouth curved stringent and scarlet. I left before she saw me because I didn't want to have to talk to her.

CLAIM

SALLIE S. SIMONS

IOWER seven in car eight," I told the porter, and followed him down the platform. I did not want to leave. I wondered that I could walk on evenly, take the train, and go away. Angry, I beat against my own will.

"Shall I put the bags here, ma'am?" said the porter. Abruptly the windows and the seats and the people of the Pullman became real to me. Looking down I saw a woman with white hair occupying my seat in section seven. She did not appear to be transient; her luggage, respectable, but going grey at the edges, filled most of the opposite seat. The porter put mine where he could, standing one suitcase on end. I felt dubious about it, and hoped she would. I was aware of being imposed upon. As she continued oblivious, anger at myself gratefully changed to irritation against her. Evidently she either did not know or refused to recognize the conventions of train travel. I was on the point of suggesting them to her when I remembered that one is courteous to old ladies. Increasingly ill-tempered, I sat silent, staring out the window at the marsh grass. Absorbed in my irritation, I had almost forgotten her, the cause of it, when she remarked conversationally, "Do you mind riding backwards?" The voice was slack, toneless, and rather pitiful. I looked at her again. She wore a black dress, plain, unobstrusive, and her face had a faint, fresh color, she was younger than I had imagined, probably not over fifty. My thought swung in again upon myself,—I did *not* like riding backwards. It made me nakedly conscious that I had no control over the speed or even my own eyesight. Things shrank thin in the distance before I could frame an image that was immediate or true. It made me dizzy; I felt helpless. Here the car lurched suddenly, driving two of her bags against my arm where the typhoid needle had gone in. I sprang up, the other hand at my shoulder. The woman had been watching me patiently and now, taking this for an answer, she turned away. I flung myself down in the seat across the aisle, glaring. She was not visibly disturbed.

The Smith College Monthly

After dinner the car filled rapidly, and I returned to number seven, intending to finish my book. Presently the woman began to breathe loudly, almost snorting. I was frightened, but her eyes were placid, apologetic. Below her skirt her knees showed, covered by tan cotton bloomers. Seeing them, I felt indecent. Leaning forward with a gasping breath she said hurriedly, "I am Mrs. Murphree."

"How do you do," I managed to answer and went back to my book.

After a few minutes she approached me again, elbows on knees, awkward and ugly, "You know, I had a son about twenty-one." A smile, unsure and trembling, parted her lips. The toneless voice continued, "He went out hunting with his best friend a year ago—and his friend shot and killed him. On purpose, but I don't know why." She paused, and smiled again, "That's why I'm wearing mourning."

She seemed to expect no answer and I sat appalled, listening, scarcely able to understand. "It don't seem right. He was such a bright boy. In Clinton, where I live, the town took up a collection and paid his first semester bills at the Boston Tech. He worked his way and won two scholarships in gold. He was so popular." She began to cry, her face grew red, and sweat shone on her forehead. She could talk about the actual shooting; it was unreal. Now she turned to me, wanting some word, painfully wanting something that neither I nor anyone could say. I went back to the book, almost shaking, seeing her black dress wrinkled, her red face, her lips shaping words she hardly heard. I did not know what I felt; it was much too big for pity.

She was still talking in a flat, tragic, monotone. "And so I'm coming down to see my girl. She's going to have a baby, but I guess she's happy. After I go back to Clinton I'll never see her again. Clinton's so far away. We don't get on like the boy and I did, but just the same I wish she was nearer."

I began to hear the clicking of the rails, the rain on the windows, and slowly I realized that the voice was still. The tightness inside of me inside of me melted, melted to a hot rage. What right had she to make me feel this? What right had she to tell me? I ought not to have heard it. It was hers; it had nothing to do with me. I turned on her, furious.

"Do you like to read, young lady?" she asked before I could speak. I sank back, mechanically answering and she continued, "I didn't get much out of this, but you'll like it," handing me *True Romance Magazine*. I laughed, aching with relief.

She had rearranged herself,—her dress was neat and her skin only lightly flushed. She seemed to have forgotten. We chatted about train riding, and I began to like her for having delivered me back to the commonplace, however unconsciously. She undertook a confidential whisper. "I'm getting off at midnight. You know, I really haven't got this seat at all; I ought to be in the coaches but I know the conductor."

"Indeed?" I said.

"But," she went on, "if you do want to go to bed before I get off, you can have the upper berth made down."

"Oh yes, thanks." I had passed beyond surprise, or feeling of any kind. No formulas applied to her; she fitted no conceivable pattern. I did not know in what relationship I stood to her or she to me. Probably, after all, I hated her. Urgent, exigent, and yet impersonal, she had made claims upon me which I could not deny. For one inescapable moment she had involved me in her life.

"It's Mrs. Murphree,—don't forget," she called, stepping down into the night.

"No," I said, "goodbye."



THOUGHTS ON THE MAGPIE

(To T. S. ELIOT and a DARK LADY)

H. M. S. P.

O spirit blithe! When first I heard thy song,
 A sunny shaft did I behold;
 For though much travelled in the realms of gold,
 And, be it right or wrong, other birds among,
 I wandered lonely as a cloud,
 Until thy music, sweet and loud,
 My ear saluted.

Ye little birds that sit and sing,
 (Call for the robin and the wren,
 And the late lark twittering in the skies!)
 Go pretty birds, to prune the wing;
 For the bonnie Magpie goes up the glen.
 Give gladness, souls, for its bold cries!
 And hear, ye ladies that despise:
All my past life is mine no more.
 Had we but world enough, and time
 (O, happy those early days when I—)

What shall I say, in earth-bound rhyme
Of her, the bird of fortune and man's eye?
Magpie! that thou shouldst be living at this hour!

Wilt thou forgive that sin where I begun,
When you and I have played this little hour?
I'm glad to know thee, thing uncommon,
And 'tis not, Magpie, in our power
To let thy teaching go for naught,
Or new acquaintance be forgot.
O world, be nobler for her sake;
Awake, Aeolian lyre, awake!
Farewell, thou art too dear for my possessing,
Thou youngest virgin daughter of the skies;
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing.
Pardon, Magpie, my bold cries;
And go on your untrodden way;
And gather ye rosebuds while ye may.

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BOOK REVIEWS



THE CHOSEN PEOPLE:

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN EUROPE

By JEROME and JEAN THARAUD

Longmans, Green & Co. 1929

In the trend of popularisation to which almost every field has been recently subjected, History has been one of the most pitiful victims. Of peoples treated thus, the Jews have suffered most, for in Jewish History there is much to attract an historical writer whose main desire is a point of view supported by chosen details. It is easy to say of them "how romantic" and to write a book so filled with such phrases as "dramatic aspects", "the love of the marvellous characteristic of the Jewish soul" that the facts which should bear this out are forgotten. In "The Chosen People" the Tharauds have been so skilful in the employing of these comfortably established terms that one is likely never to realize that the "dramatic aspects" are not definitely described or even named; they are hinted at obscurely. One feels continually that the next chapter will bring forth the promised definite explanation—and the next chapter speaks vaguely of "the all-powerful authority of the church."

To make Jewish History even more entrancing to writers of this kind, the point of view they wish to take is already so firmly established in the minds of their probable readers, particularly the Gentiles, that it will require little support and almost no proof. Mr. Zangwill and Mr. Browne have prepared the way, and the Tharauds, following it blindly, can talk blithely of the narrowness of the ghetto, of the revolt against the old ritual, of the persecutions. Their readers, having seen it all before, will never question it, so where

is the need of proof, of anything more than vague discussion and theory?

This discussion and theory may be very excellent of its kind, but its kind is obviously not historical, and the Tharauds themselves insist that they have written a "short history of the Jews in Europe". Under the mistaken impression that dates and definite information discourage the popular reader they have, when faced with a quite unavoidable fact, blushed, and skirted it by saying, as they did of Maimonides, that he was "born in the Middle Ages". They have not even given a satisfactory description of the life of the Jew; they merely mention frequently the word 'ghetto' under the apparent impression that it alone draws a complete picture.

This is a book of sentimental phrases about a people of whom the popular tradition is that they have been deeply and continually wronged, both by themselves and by other peoples. The Tharauds take advantage of this tradition, as of others and speak pityingly of the wronged Jewish race, not, of course, illustrating or explaining to any sufficient extent. While they are doing this, it apparently never occurs to them that, by giving the Jews such light and flip-pant historical treatment they are adding another insult to a list which they insist is already quite long enough.

M. C.

CAVENDER'S HOUSE

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

Macmillan. 1929

It has been said that Edwin Arlington Robinson's themes illustrate "the success of failure, or the failure of success." While this statement is perhaps not entirely true, it is obvious that he is greatly attracted by worldly failures. He salutes the gallant ones, but has no weak sympathy for those who fail from vaingloriousness and cowardice. The distinction may be made clear by comparing Flammonde and Miniver Cheevy, whose very names reveal their characters. But Robinson is neither blinded, by the inner victory that may be achieved, to the warping effect of lack of worldly success, nor hasty, in spite of his lack of sympathy, to judge

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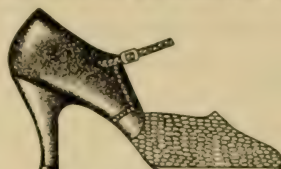
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contemptuously the complete failures. He records what he finds in his characters with scrupulous fidelity and tolerance, and his dealing with persons who are in some way unsuccessful is really the manifestation of an intense interest in the "mapping of the human heart," an interest which is somewhat one-sided because of his own temperament. His latest poem, *Cavender's House*, illustrates this interest. Cavender, who is himself both characters in an imaginary dialogue with his wife twelve years after he has killed her, suspecting that she is unfaithful to him, is certainly a failure, in a spiritual rather than a material way; but the emphasis is not so much on this fact as on the meticulous analysis of the tortured mind of Cavender.

There is an obvious resemblance to Browning in Robinson's interest in creating character instead of stressing his own emotion, and in the use of the dramatic narrative for this purpose; although in *Cavender's House* the form is not monologue, but a mixture of narrative and dialogue. Robinson's philosophy, however, is in strong contrast to Browning's buoyant optimism and faith in the essential soundness of the universe. He perceives fully the cruelty of life and makes no attempt to disguise it, but he finds a certain amount of satisfaction in facing it without cowardice. He sees human beings always in the grasp of unknown powers, but he knows also "the faith within the fear," and the possibility that there is some reason for existence. Both the doubt and the fear are fully set forth in *Cavender's House*:

"There are still doors in your house that are locked;
And there is only you to open them,
For what they may reveal. There may be still
Some riches hidden there, and even for you,
Who spurned your treasure as an angry king
Might throw his crown away, and in his madness
Not know what he had done till all was done.
But who are we to say when all is done?
Was ever an insect flying between two flowers
Told less than we are told of what we are?
Cavender, there may still be hidden for you
A meaning in your house why you are here."

Another resemblance to Browning is found in the intellectual demands made on the reader, though not by elusive-

ness of expression: Robinson's obscurity is instead dependent on a deceptive quietness and lack of ostentation. The most notable quality of his style is economy of the point of frugality. He does not lack genuinely passionate feeling, but while such feeling is strikingly obvious in Browning, Robinson's restraint leads often to a prosaic understatement which prevents the average reader from realizing the remarkable depth and power of his feeling. If evidence is needed, it may be found in lines like the following:

"The man who makes a chaos of himself
Should have the benefit of his independence
In his defection. He should wreck himself
Alone in his own ship, and not be drowned,
Or cast ashore to die, for scuttling others.
I have been asking, Cavender, since that night,
Where so malicious and inconsiderate
A devil could hide in you for so long time.
There may be places in us all where things
Live that would make us run if we should see them
If only we could run away from them!
But, Cavender, we can't; and that's a pity."

Cavender's House strengthens the impression made by *Tristram*, that Robinson's best work is found in his long poems rather than the short ones, since they furnish a better vehicle for continuous thought and for the observation of human character and its operations which is the material of his art. The succession of his most prominent themes has been described by Mr. Herbert Gorman as; first the creation of single imaginary characters, then the revitalizing of historical personages from the data and atmosphere left behind them, then the original representation of legendary figures who stand for certain spiritual manifestations, their re-application, as it were, to our modern times, and, finally, the creation of groups of imaginary figures in juxtaposition, acting out life. In *Cavender's House* the juxtaposition is not strictly of figures, since one of the two persons is expressed through the other's reconstruction of her, but it gives the contact of individualities, whose clashes reveal the perplexed mind and heart of Cavender. At the same time Robinson's skill in the subtle analysis of a single character is highly developed. As an analysis it is more convincing than the leg-

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endary material he has dealt with in earlier poems, because in spite of the universal traits presented in these poems some sense of anachronism is almost inescapable.

In *Cavender's House* as in his other work Robinson has made no experiments with new or unusual poetic forms. His blank verse is extremely careful, and its most notable qualities are simplicity and dignity. There is no rich imagery, no sensuous music, no exquisite moment. But readers who reject the obvious and prefer a sharp, fine flavor, a special rather than a general audience, will always appreciate the distinction of Robinson's work; and *Cavender's House* will be found as excellent technically as the work which has preceded it, and an advance over this work as regards penetrating analysis of character.

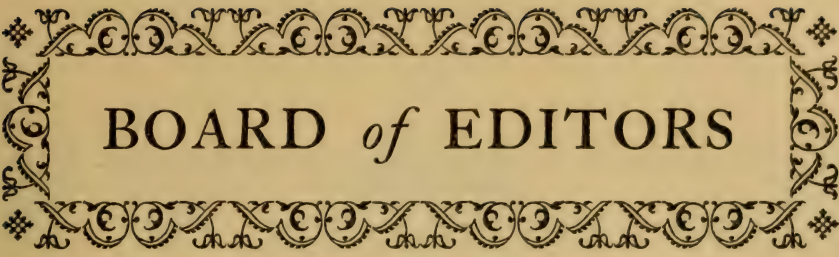
Ruth D. Pillsbury.



A decorative border with a repeating floral and scrollwork pattern runs along the top, bottom, and sides of the page.

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SMITH COLLEGE MONTHLY

COMFIELD VALLEY

ANNE LLOYD BASINGER

I

OME giant going for a walk down North America, eons ago, made a gouge with his stick where the Berkshires today fall away southward into small perverse bumps. The gash healed; the pile of dirt thrown up from the furrow weathered into soft green mountains; rocks uncovered at that time continued to nuzzle out through oaks, soft wood trees and evergreens; and hollows in the mountains filled with water, to spill over into the crannies below. Very early—fifty years before Independence—colonists had already established themselves here, cut clearings, built houses, and begun the process of civilization. Possibly these colonists were Puritans; though I doubt if they ever exalted the interests of religion above good, worldly pursuits. Yet they have never looked like Puritan stock, to me. Perhaps they suspected that Lucifer, and not God, scooped out Comfield Valley for them; for they took care to render unto Caesar the things that were Caesar's; and repaid the giant archangel penny for penny in the hard coin of pride.

The motorist from New York remembered his drive through the Valley. He remembered it not only because the large estates or cheap modern cottages of New York and southern Connecticut threw it into relief. It was an individuality; its features etched themselves upon the mind. Winding among hills and second-growth woods, the road straightened across two hay-fields; and suddenly passed between white houses set well back from the street. Elm

shade and maple shade fell upon the road; the houses were sunny. Their simplicity was unaffectedly colonial; their owners unsentimentally painted them when they greyed with exposure; they bespoke insolent conservatism. Comfield Valley had not seen fit to idealize herself; she harbored a very ugly group of little stores in her midst; she had no back-streets; she was a sepulcher unwhited. Slightly beyond the stores, the high-road split; and in the triangle ancient elms and a monument marked her center. If you took the left road, you were soon out of town again, rising a little above the Valley floor, yet lying in the protection of an intimate hill-ridge; and soon, through tangled hedge-rows, over stone walls propped by wooden posts and tangled with wire and vines, you saw the patch-work theme of fields connected by other hedge-rows, picked out in darker green by inconsistent woodland patches. The right road, holding to the town a little longer, dipped across a sunny field and a meandering brook in its second childhood; then climbed stubbornly out of the Valley, and twisted about the face of a dwarf mountain. This rocky knob jutting from smaller hills went half-naked like a beggar, in tattered bushes and vines; it sat like an East Indian philosopher surveying the long ridge opposite, across a brilliant swamp below. A little higher the road passed a handful of ghost-grey shacks, still climbed, attained the top of the little range, and loitered along it, to let you see blue hills rolling over one another on three sides, like the sea; yellow or light-green fields again; knobs and knolls again, breaking the Valley with their knuckles; and two lakes cupped like flat pieces of lapis lazuli in the hollow of the Valley's hand. A moment on that hill; you would remember it after passing; then down on the other side, the treacherous, rolling side, where careless motorists lost their lives every season. Comfield Valley only said, "I told you so," when cars left the road there and smashed into the trees or the rocks; it gained stories to tell; it was indifferent to the vicissitudes of tourists. Besides, Allyn Hill was outside; the dropping-off place; the farewell of the town to a stranger. People who invade such a private hollow must expect a rude awakening on the other side.

II.

Little babies in Comfield Valley were wise; they ignored the wild mountains, and gave their full attention to their

feeding. In this they imitated intelligent town-people, who disliked fishing, or tracing up their brooks to their sources, or berrying on steep hills. These Valley-dwellers preferred contemplation of each other on flat porches, while the season allowed; for winter brought wildness soon enough. No amount of sticky pink laurel or purple-bloomed berries attracted them.

But little boy babies grew out of their wisdom with their Christening dress; and soon took to spending all their days in summer along the brooks with their lines, or in the field with their pails, coming down at night-fall as full of nettles as pin-cushions with pins, to sell from door to door. And large boys who wouldn't grow into men ran away from their work to loaf on high land. They lay on their backs in fields that curved out like fat pillows; their hats over their eyes, and slept. Their wives shook their heads; but the neighbors never troubled to think of them at all. For in Comfield Valley many things are taken for granted. No, they wouldn't think of them at all—except sometimes, in passing Willie Jones on the street. The sight of Willie Jones, the gray, tough, brown man with pale eyes, made anybody think. And that, notwithstanding that it had happened to him fifty years before. He made them remember—and shiver.

They remembered that Bill Jones took Willie out fishing when the boy was only six years old; and in the heat of the day fell asleep beside the stream. When he woke up, Willie was gone. So he called him by name: "Willie—Willie Jones!" But nothing answered him save the rocks on the hill opposite. He tried to hunt, but couldn't find anything, not so much as a foot-print, so thick were the low-growing laurel-bushes. He must have waked about four of that summer day; and he hunted until dark. Then he ran down to the Valley and asked for help. Other men went out; then still others; then the whole town heard, and everybody went to Town Hall to wait for news. The mother was there too, crying. They sat waiting all night, while their men hunted; but in the morning Willie wasn't found; so they went away about their work; only, the mother sat and held her hands in her lap. Hunting parties kept combing the mountains. None of the men worked at anything else; they would sleep a little, and then go hunt. You wouldn't think a little boy could wander so far! At last there came

a rumour from the mountains. Ryan, the old bell-ringer, leaped at the ropes in Town Hall tower, and again the town-people came running. They waited three hours. Then, about two o'clock of the third night Willie rode back, carried high on the shoulders of tall mountaineers, who had tossed up the father too as they swung down the road. With torches and shouts, they marched into Town Hall, swept up the mother, and set her on the platform to receive her son. The people of Comfield Valley shouted wildly. But Mrs. Jones only looked at her boy, and then she wrung her hands. They fell silent and looked too; and it came to them all at once—something was wrong with the child. Willie Jones was crazy—as mad as a dog; and he never recovered. He knew nobody; he continually saw something else behind them. After that the Valley people hated the mountains with renewed force; and they feared them, too.

III.

I have been careful to say that town-people feared the mountains. You are not to think that all the inhabitants of Comfield Valley were town-people. Since the beginning there had been a queer division in the region: two parties, utterly distinct; and nobody knew which was the older. There was the Valley stock, and the mountain stock. They seldom intermarried. They hated each other always, and even along the back edges of town, where the factions mingled, living side by side, they were as oil and water. The mountain people loved the lonely streams and woods, where the sweet-fern scented the air. They were too proud to rub sleeves with anybody, even though their own might be patched and sweat-stained, while the other man's was made of clean new cloth. The mountain people had their own names for places; it must have been one of them who named the little, tattered mountain north of town Barak Matiff, a Welsh name, and the only one of the township. For years they had used the warped huts beyond Barak Matiff for their center; and the town-people used to refer to that place as Disturbance Corner. Here dwelt four main families, named, by coincidence, after animals: the Foxes, the Wolves, the Coons and the Lyons. They used to fight with one another, when they were drunk; and twice someone had been killed. Valley people let them alone; for they preferred to manage their own affairs, even in law.

They seldom attacked people outside of their own kind; remained fiercely aloof; and bred among themselves, until the blood ran thin with disease. They were not immoral, they simply had no morals. It was a public scandal that one of them had sold his daughter on the trains; and the affair of the two brothers was public property. These two, living together in adjacent houses, found that they preferred each other's wives. So they traded; but since one woman was superior to the other in strength and fruitfulness, a cow was thrown into the bargain to even the value. This happy arrangement was discussed in the Valley; but town-people were mainly indulgent. The mountaineers had always conducted their affairs so.

Valley people preferred to live under the nation's and the state's law. They were of that middle class nowhere so special in position as in New England; yet they had sent out governors and judges to the outside world. Here too, certain names recurred frequently: Allyn, Todd, Comfield. There were millionaire Allyns and Todds, and Comfields, and there were poor Allyns and Todds and Comfields. In the Allyn family the relationship was as close as second cousin; but neither branch spoke to the other. They were of ancient English stock, and could, if they chose, use their coat of arms. None of the Todds or Comfields were related; the only explanation I know for them is that certain retainers of the earliest Todd and Comfield had taken the family name. In the case of the Comfields, at least, proof was to be had; all old members of town knew the Comfield family tree well, since they had ruled the Valley for so long that their history was also town history. This was not like Puritan New England; but Comfield Valley was individual, not typical.

As I say, most of the Comfield Valley people were middling in family and fortune. But they had their paupers. The two poorest families in the whole township lived on the community by petty thievery and by begging; and they were tolerated because one could not see them starve. In both cases children were born every year, despite ill health, poor feeding and poverty. The Dick Todds were stringy and dark; silent and self-sufficient. A strain of the rare mountain blood came in somewhere. They scabbled a living by animal cleverness; a sick breed, who ate cheap candy in preference to plain food, and looked at your chin, slant-eyed, in passing on the street. The

Pillings, on the other hand, made a disturbing appeal, by the innocent delight with which they received each baby. Their hovel stood in the very ditch, like a beggar indeed; and the grass of its meagre yard was worn from the face of the soured ground by the poisons of human beings and chickens. The mother could be seen almost any day on her bleak little porch, holding up her baby and kissing it, her eyes turned side-ways shining to be admired. She had been very beautiful, with blue-black hair and deep blue eyes. Now her teeth were broken and gone; her skin coarsened. But she kept the slim lines of beauty, like a ship which ages; and her tall husband, who had been blond and handsome as Apollo, would still be a man if he could stop drinking.

Town-people were not so very much better than mountain-people for morals. They were too old as a community to fear consequences. They were set, dangerously; and after convention, expediency was their only brake. I do not mean that they sinned enthusiastically. They merely remained passive. They tolerated much that might have been prevented; because it was not their business to act. They loathed no crime so heartily as inquisitiveness; and rather than look, they would bandage their eyes. The work of the ministers in Comfield Valley was desperately trying; because they expected the Lord to mind his own business as they did theirs. Sermons must be agreeable; religion, sluggish. So two things happened in the township; in one church, ministers changed every two or three years, as new men tried and failed to stir the old mixture; in the other, a very frail old gentleman recommended himself to everyone's heart for a reason which he alone knew. He bowed to that reason every Sunday as he took the desk to preach. "There they sit. Sinners—why, I dare say not one of them deserves Purgatory, even. Well, I must teach them their own nobility. . . ." For this was his belief: that you could coax the human animal farther by praise than by abuse; because, in cultivating his self-respect, you may make him be what he thinks he is. This elderly clergyman saved more souls in his year than many men do in a lifetime. As I say, the proof of his success was that nobody knew his secret.

Noah Comfield of Comfield Valley differed from everyone. He was, of course, their ruler. I believe that his

manipulation of local politics through relatives and dependents proceeded along Medicean lines; he made everybody his dependent. He owned or controlled nearly a third of town property; and could look for miles across land untraversed by any save those whom he invited. Of the Valley people by birth and education, he allied himself with mountaineers in his love of woods and their lore; he camped with them, knew them familiarly, and commanded their respect by blood, wisdom and attainments. They either hated or loved the courtly gentleman; there was cause for both; but such love or hate was intimate. Comfield touched his neighbors more intimately than any other among them; yet was more alien. He was an institution, like the old minister and the chimes and Town Meeting.

IV.

In summer, wimpling shadows dappled the lawns of Comfield Valley; the air was champagne; robins, song-sparrows and thrushes, particularly bold in that country, made a shimmer of sound to accompany the leaf-dance; and the fire-flies were drunken stars fallen to the fields at night. You might live there for months, thinking this heaven; unless rainy weeks like those of last summer discouraged you into pessimism.

A summer visitor would never know much about Comfield Valley. He would remain ignorant simply because town-people would not bother to undeceive him. The Valley's reserve with strangers did not admit of compromise. Even the hotel received strangers reluctantly, as if grudging space to aliens. Sometimes a traveller "of the wrong type" would find everything full; so full that no extra meal could be served; and it did not matter if the chairs were empty, the rooms vacant, he must look farther. Others, more fortunately received, might sit upon the porch for weeks, rocking—the only sport to be found in the Valley—and never meet a town-person. He would see one or two laborers go by in sweaty blue shirts, carrying spades or pitchforks; he would see straggling children, or Mrs. Todd pushing her latest baby down town in a dilapidated carriage; he would see decently dressed men about the post-office steps Saturday night, and the ball-team on Sunday; and automobiles and sagging buggies; but he would not see Comfield Valley. He would know nothing.

The fall might bring more or less understanding to him. The foliage turned pastel, then flame, picked out in dark evergreens, like a tapestry; tall vaporous clippers sailed the deep blue sky; the crystal air left a stinging remembrance. The wind would tease the leaves, and twist them down; the country would bleed with Virginia Creeper; the sun through oak-leaves would glow as it does in the thin ear of a gnarled old man in cold weather. Town-people put on sweaters over their cotton shirts or dresses; sent their children to school; and urged their last duties to farm and wood-pile intensely. They wore an expression of finality. The keen observer could recognize a change in them. Finally came the stealthy dropping of leaves every day; and then a great storm and wind, lashing with flails; then lemon-colored sunlight on a cold Valley; and the trees' bare branches smoke-purple along the hills; and the house-holders built fires; and the gardens laid down, sickly brown; and the streets would be desolate. That was fall.

Winter no outsider saw. Secrecy fell with the whiteness of snow; and hid Comfield Valley. The town was a woman with a secret malady which she dragged herself away to protect from inquisitive eyes; it was an epileptic whose crises were not to be investigated. From the long oblivion, pierced by stabbing pain, she woke exhausted in the spring. Towards February news would sometimes come through to the papers of other cities, of a murder, or of fire, or illness. Pneumonia and influenza took their toll. A boy lost his road on a snowy night, and fell through the ice of a lake to drown in his car. The others burned a succession of barns, because they found it "too damn' dull." An old mountaineer vented a long-harbored grudge by setting fire to his enemy's house. A few more men would begin to drink heavily. One sought recreation in physical danger; abused his family; brooded upon his own degeneracy, and finally killed himself. Horror entered every imagination, as grey-whiteness impressed the retina. Comfield Valley rested three months petrified with cold and shadow, eyebrows raised, eyeballs rolled till the whites gleamed; lips peeled back in a grin from the teeth, nostrils distended. And foam flecked its lips. Then in the spring it gradually relaxed, stirred, shivered uncontrollably; took stock of its losses; and little by little picked up its old life. Nerves would twitch; tales would be told that made the tellers and

the listeners sick; new criminals would be tolerated for old sentiments; and nobody stoned his neighbor, because he knew that the winter had not left him guiltless. Children quite innocent in the fall would have learned suffering and passion; men at their prime in the fall would be old when the thaw came; women would be more silent, or talk with a fiercer defiance.

Gradually they calmed themselves. But not before clashes had occurred that ran the gamut from tragedy to farce. Spring quarrels were bitter, but soon passed over.

There was Tom Allyn the grave-digger, who met Bet on the street. He had been to school with her; they were old friends. Bet was a fragile little lady, her white hair very pretty; her pointed features puckered impulsively. Her hands shook in the spring.

"Tom Allyn, when are you going to fix my lot?"

"I have fixed your lot seven times."

"Tom, you are an old cheat. I paid you to fix that lot three years ago; and it still looks a sight. My father must turn in his grave to lie under that wilderness."

"I planted young arbor vitae seven times. They die. I told you they wouldn't grow without you manured the ground. It ain't nothing but weeds and gravel."

And so on, until Allyn, who had quarreled with her happily those sixty years, broke suddenly into anger and ground out, "Well, I guess you're the meanest woman God ever made. And I warn you to be looking for a new grave-digger, Bet; for before I'd dig your grave after this I'd see you lie on top the ground and rot!"

Then Bet fled for her home moaning, and sobbed privately into her pillow for fear of being left to rot above ground.

At the same time a girl left the Valley for the city to hide; the children in the schools wrenched themselves out of all control by the teacher; and the ministers walked the streets meekly with an anxious frown, deliberately cut by those who feared to be made sources of prayer. One lad who had always been wild, coming from a shaggy mountain family, shot up, developed slender, faun-like grace, and coolly plotted a succession of cruelties, defiantly, ostentatiously, thus beginning a criminal career in disdain of all law.

Such was the secret of Comfield Valley. The secret of her indulgences, her grimness; her decadence.

V.

Those tardy, haunted spring months of that country are always associated in my mind with the sound of wood-chopping; and the dingy, grass-smothered place which bordered the property we bought on the north. Our own house was old enough, and sadly in need of paint; but the house next door seemed sealed with cob-webs, caterpillar-tents and dirt. In the very center of the Valley, flanked by neat lawns and decent houses, it looked slovenly and forlorn.

In the dawn, as early as five o'clock, when the sky was scarcely lighter than at night, and the earth still deep blue, I would wake to hear an irregular chop-chopping from the yard on the north. The dawn was a time of cold and silence in Comfield Valley—a misty, lifeless hour when the earth held its breath to listen. In such perfect stillness, the sound of the wood-chopping echoed from one side of the Valley to the other with as sharp a concussion as if the abrupt mountain walls to east and west were being struck with something flat like a plank. It sounded terribly lonely. I think it even had an element of mysticism for me then; for the chopping stopped with the coming of day and the stirring of people in other houses.

Like all singular things, this sound held a fascination. It would have drawn me to the window to see—I don't know what weird chopper; but it made me so conscious of the warm shelter of bed that movement was impossible. Then at last my curiosity broke the trance, carrying me to the north side of the house on a morning clammy with cloud-blankets. Why the sight that I found should have oppressed me as it did I cannot tell. It was merely the gnarled figure of a woman, with stringy grey hair and faded blue dress, taking large heavy pieces of wood from a pile on her left, and cutting them into stove-lengths which she threw into a basket on her right. When the basket was filled, she picked it up, slanting her narrow shoulders to accommodate herself to the weight, and walked unevenly into the house.

We asked the workmen on our place who lived next door; and they told us, "The Hodders. Old Hodder, he's a busy-body; and say—you want to nail things down

around here. Mis' Hodder is so close, she'd squeeze blood out er turnip."

We saw that round jelly of a man, John Hodder, next day. He came to tell us what to do with our house. But the close woman kept indoors while we were awake, and we knew she resented us. Then one day she saw us scraping and preparing to oil some old furniture; and came to watch us curiously, over the fence. She didn't seem formidable. Her eyes were hollow, with a washed-out look. She told us that she had some old "stuff" she was cutting up for fire-wood; and that "The wooden bed's real pretty, all made of cherry; only Mr. Hodder likes everything to be nice and modern, so he's got him some good brass ones." Finally she asked us to see her trash: eight Hitchcock chairs, the bed and a table! So far we had made no offers of friendship or curiosity; but now we asked her the price of the pieces. Ten cents apiece! Today people are wiser. We gave her a much fairer part of their real worth, and carried them home triumphant. I remember her face then; the expression of her body. The money she handled reverently, touching it with her rough finger-tips. Her eyes clouded with a vague regret at losing her "truck" that she had been fond of. But her attitude towards us had changed. She said, "Just think. When you folks come here, I used to get up to do my chores at four in the morning, so's not to have to be looked at by you. Why, even I wouldn't do that scraping work!" And from that time she performed any dreary piece of work under our eyes, her air almost insolent with contempt for us.

She did not annoy us, however. She was too drab and tired to be anything but pitiful. Even when she fulfilled the prophecy of our workmen, and came to "beat us down" on some petty bargain, we could not blame her. In our short stay at Comfield Valley, we had already seen the parsimony of her husband, whose good blood and gentleman's education had become a pretext for idleness. In that house over the north line, there was no order, no division of labour, no leisurely family life. One child had grown up and married; another had died. The Hodder place was kept from disintegration by one person, Mrs. Hodder. One could hardly estimate the nature and extent of her desolation. She cut herself off from sympathy, because this entailed criticism of Hodder, whom she admired as a

master. Help or gifts of any kind were considered shameful in the Valley; a present was charity there; and she considered anything for which she did not pay an insult and a punishment. She had always been held by the bright flowers we set out; yet even after she had become our friend, she would not take a root from us. Something held her hands. "When I get around to it," she said, "I don't know but I might." But she never got around to planting flowers. She feared to let herself go. She had lost all patience with life; and found it easier not to struggle. And she feared interests which would make her do so. At times a cruel fault in her character rode her, filling her with a mania to hurt those about her, as if in revenge for her own suffering; and then she preferred to hurt those whom she loved. Again, she was an automaton. Down-town the shop-keeper set his jaw when Mrs. Hodder came in to market. She was uncommonly shrewd at driving a bargain—a shrill-voiced, brittle, dry creature whose horny hand opened very reluctantly on the little money held within. She had a shameless mode of attack bred of desperation, having long ago lost all dignity, and being broken to humiliation as a horse is to a bridle.

I saw her first in the spring; and it was springtime when she paid us the call. She had never come into our yard, or entered our front door. Never, until that May day, when the apple trees burst with pink blossoms, the grass suddenly made a sally into unstable sunlight, and pink knobs on the rugged oaks pushed off last year's leaves. Then we saw her walk up to our door and knock, for a formal call. But even then we did not guess the importance of this visit, until she told us her news, in a matter-of-fact voice. "I saw Doctor yesterday. I ain't felt just right this winter; so I saw him. He said he guessed I'm going to die in a month or so." She turned her faded eyes upon us, simply looking to see how it would make us feel. There was not a vestige of emotion in those eyes. "Well," she said, "I guess I ain't sorry. Don't know but it'll be a good thing. Family don't need me. Mr. Hodder won't have to pay for my food. He'll be better at the girl's house."

There was little to say. She only wanted us to listen.

"You know, I'm real glad they found out. It'll be a nice month. John Hodder can spare it for me to use on myself! Been years since I've got around to doing what I like.

There is a piece of embroidery I started when I was a bride. I used to do real nice embroidery, when there was time. I'll finish it before I die."

She stayed for an hour or more. She wished to explain her visit.

"I guess you are the only people I have to talk to. I have come to feel real friendly, living next door and all."

Then she nodded with a smile and went away.

When she told her family, they were paralyzed with the news. So she took control of preparations. From the bed to which she was soon confined, she directed the housecleaning and the work on the lawn. It was her thought to make her funeral a credit to the Hodder family; and like a general she laid her plans. I hear that the burial robes were beautiful—trimmed with a piece of exquisite embroidery that had taken forty years in the completing. Thus Mrs. Hodder spent her last weeks, working needle and brain; and never, after that hour's visit at our house, opening her lips to speak to any soul save to command when that was necessary. John Hodder and the girl had become meek; and too fearful to regret her. She rode to the cemetery almost unattended, save for the family and the minister. She was buried beneath the embroidery.

But Mrs. Hodder had liked stark solitude.

VI.

It is easy to think that Mrs. Hodder symbolized the Valley, in her life and in her death. Easy to think of that as a dying town, whose mortality indeed exceeded the births, dragging through its last years in ugly indignity, dying forlorn and defiant. Yet this conception is only the faulty judgment of a weakling who cannot look further than the winter toll of tragedy. Another death symbolized Comfield Valley.

Old Mrs. Winship lived in a little house close in the corner of the road. She had grown out of the soil from a stubborn, upstanding family; had inherited the stubbornness, and from sheer exuberance of life transformed herself into a little tyrant. Her mind cut like a razor, in a twinkle; her tongue did foolish things. She flirted with men of many stations in her girlhood; and finally, after much managing, married a man older by years, and socially her superior. It was useless to play the lady there where she

had grown up; but her wit carried her far; she made her husband pay for his comforts by spoiling her; and she busied herself with intrigue and quixotic kindnesses. Now at the close of her life she had taken to going to church every Sunday, in a stiff black silk dress and bonnet; and sat under the young minister, whoever he might be at the time, fixing him pertly with her blue eyes. Her mouth folded neatly into nothing, like a picnic-cup; for she was toothless. She prayed with her eyes open. Her daughter, who was nearly seventy, went to early church so as to be free for household duties later; but Mrs. Winship played Mary, and sat through the long service. Afterwards she stood and conversed outside the church doors. Her talk ran somewhat like this.

"Good day, good day; it's a lovely summer. And I'm ve-ry glad it is, for it's likely to be my last on earth."

"Why, what do you mean, Mrs. Winship?"

"This time next year I'll be in Realms Above."

"Get out, Mrs. Winship—an old sinner like you? You aren't even good enough for dying, yet."

"Har-har! Well, maybe I ain't. You know, I'm a-goin' to steal this minister-man here."

"You can't. He's mine." (From the minister's wife.)

"Oh yes I kin. I've a turrible way with the men when I want. I'm a wild woman."

"I won't let him out."

"Well, you wait. Say, I wouldn't go listen to that old goat thar," (as the old minister from the other church approached.) "He ain't handsome. Got one foot in the grave." She would raise her voice for him to hear.

"Go 'long, Minnie Winship. I just remind you that you're no chicken yourself; that's why you don't like me."

"Yes. That's so. I like 'em young; and I'm an old fool; for eighty-seven years have passed over my haid, and the angels will come for me soon."

She lived on and on, aging imperceptibly, until she was unable to leave her house. But still when people came to see her she began by saying, "Soon I'll be in Realms Above;" and ended by cackling at her own jokes.

She had added a prophecy, however. "I'm an old fool now; but I'll be a bigger before the end. An ugly woman that's funny is fit to live; but an ugly simpleton should be put out." True enough, her mind was failing her; she

became increasingly forgetful; and her efforts to recollect herself were so painful that her friends ceased to go to the house. Then one of the severe winters wrought a tremendous change. Mrs. Winship had become quite mad. She recovered much of her strength; used to run out into the street in her night-dress, and only with the greatest difficulty could be persuaded to return to the warm kitchen. The Winships had become very poor. Her daughter had always been tyrannized by Mrs. Winship's stronger will; and now scarcely knew how to cope with a situation which left her mistress for the first time. The fear she had always felt of her mother prevented her from controlling the mad woman; so passers-by in the street often saw a gaunt figure in the window or doorway, with yellow skin of parchment, fingers like clawed hooks, skull almost naked of flesh; smeared with snuff, her short white hair wild about her face in a cloud. Thus old Mrs. Winship wandered piteously as she had foreseen she would, seeking the Realms Above. One day a change came. She slept heavily, and never awoke. The angel had come for her after all.

They all went to see her before the funeral, and followed her to the grave. She lay in a mass of flowers, in black silk, a deep lace about her throat. Her snowy hair was smoothed back from her high forehead. Her eyelids were thin and white, as emotional as a Spanish woman's; so light on her cheek, they seemed to flutter with life. The wrinkles had been smoothed away; the lips had fallen naturally into a long level smile of serenity. About the oval face there was an almost royal fineness; a pride which explained all, excused all. It was a pride in her own sufficiency within herself, as of one who had elected to conduct her own soul to its destiny independent of God; and who preferred to destroy herself rather than win luke-warm salvation from religion. Yet the dead woman's face was not the face of one damned. It seemed to tell that God had admired her spirit, and accepted her.

SNAPSHOT

BARBARA DAMON SIMISON



I ride past hills torn jagged by the pines,
But I dismiss them when I wave my hand,
And look instead at birches' flowing lines,
Or rivers cutting mazes in the land.
I say a "Charming!" in response to falls,
That tumble on down into larger streams,
And stony pastures running far from walls;
Past woods all dappled by the slanting beams
Of sun that gilds the fields; and then I find
Myself with lack of words to even speak
Of look of tired roads that dip and wind,
Or cowslips that go wading in the creek.
They give me prose and verse and life to live;
I only give to them what others give!

DISCOVERY

BARBARA DAMON SIMISON



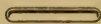
I saw pathos
In a crocus
Coming back in
Spring, to find that
Young De Quincey
Saw it too, but
Long ago.

I liked pale smoke
Trailing up from
Blown-out tapers
Only to read that
Keats put it in a
Line or so.

But, the other
Day I found my
Love for you all
Hidden away; nor
Poet, nor you could
Find it first—and
That—I know!

RETURN

F. ADAMS



ES, it was odd, she thought, walking slowly home across the yellow windswept golf course in the smoky aftermath of an early sunset—it was odd that in the last long years away from home, this noxious sweetness of her brief returns had never drugged her quite as now. At first, it was just an overpowering inertia—a slow adjustment of all processes, but in the end, she succumbed with the abandon of a lover to the steady throb of that life which let her go for a time, then sucked her back as resistlessly as flotsam in a tide. She had always been glad to go again, to shake off the atmosphere which settled so familiarly around her, to expand and feel herself a full-grown personality in an environment which did not know her, in situations which she could consciously create. She liked to feel the old existence sliding from her, knowing it to be an everpresent undercurrent to which she inevitably returned, exposing herself indifferently to a life which meant nothing either way—nothing but a remote consuming paralysis useless to fight, puzzling to feel. Life here was a still pool, and yet, like some great fish swerving suddenly near the surface, through the tangled weeds of her consciousness, she felt a vague presentiment, a thought trembling near firmer realization, that flashed back into the depths, a will o' the wisp, and left her dreaming by the pool.

What was it now that swelled up within her, crying to be released, aching through every limb until she could hardly breathe for the queer tumescent throbbing? Some Celtic chant the winds had played, sweeping through her body to answer a half-forgotten tune that long had sung itself into her being, some dim subliminal fragment struggling towards light.

It must be spring, she thought, gazing at the pale new grass on the greens, the lace of the buds against the sky, the dogs rolling ecstatically on the fairways. But all springs were the same,—there had always been this unacknowledged pain, a pain that surged through all living things, that found its consummation in universal creating, eternal life. And there had always been a happiness greater

than the longing, a mad enthusiasm for all places, all things, all experience, a recurrent seasonal excitement correlated with a frenzy to experiment. It was natural that the approaching resurrection of the naked trees, the stiffened earth, should communicate a similar sensation of rebirth to her. It was natural that the long train of the feathery hills and the curve of the golf course, steeped as they were in familiarity, and linked with the earliest memories of her life should touch off a peculiar emotional set, but why, now, did it transform itself into a fierce desire, beating wildly through her pulses, pulling her out of her soft shell of contentment, to fray each open nerve? She had never remained home for longer than a sweeping glance at the house, the people, the country, then the longing to escape returned, and there was always a means at hand, an excuse, and once more independent, a free-lance to comb the minute centers of the world at hand. Time that seemed so measured here, split up when she left into a thousand varied particles. This moment of acute consciousness had severed her mind, then suddenly resynthesized the elements into an unexpected unity. She had lost all personal feeling in that momentary cataclysm. She was no longer an individual but a human expression of the surrounding earth. All vestige of her own character had disappeared, she was mystically identified with the primordial oneness of this place, which the diverse encounters with a wider world had displaced for a time, until she thought she had forgotten. Subconsciously those first reactions must have persisted, moulding her, however unwillingly, in their fashion, until at last a crisis brought the two parts into conflict, and the shock momentarily obliterated all more recent experience.

The country club loomed distantly across a wraith-filled void—a low colonial building, full of nationally historic ghosts, headquarters of Lafayette in the Revolution; an old house, nursing its stately memories to the soft cascade of a waterfall in the wet, earth-scented ravine. A servant held the door, taking her golf-bag quietly. She wandered through the rooms, holding back the flood of memories clinging to the scent of leather, cigarettes, and flowers, the drowsy warmth of hot chocolate after skating, New Year's Eve and egg nog; the soft arms of the sofa after tennis; the tremulous desperation of first dances when older girls

seemed sure and effortless. She was older now, she reflected. Funny how the effort seemed to fade—success or not, it didn't much matter. She watched the gardener arrange a bowl of flowers.

"Same old snap dragons, John," she sighed. It seemed painful somehow that things didn't change, but there was a queer aesthetic satisfaction in the uniformity, as if it squared with her persisting recollections that were not buried after all.

She heard the door slam shut behind her as she sauntered homeward across the deserted clock-golf green, wondering if they would fill in the holes for the garden party in May, in the immemorial manner. The deep park around the house was haunted with the shadows of vast trees thrown out across the mist. She paused a moment by the brook, kicking loose the dried leaves of last autumn, watching them eddy noiselessly toward the bridge.

"How sombre it is," she thought, "the silence and the fog." Further on there was a pool where two white swans floated through the gloom. She had swum there surreptitiously on hot summer nights, and lain naked in the moonlight on the thick turf, trembling to a thin wild song like the "Lohengrin" prelude. She often felt that curious singing in her ears, particularly on sultry nights, and the sweet high sound made her think of milk and ice, and moonlight. . .

The swans circled near her, and she was suddenly reminded of two white peacocks on an island in Maggiore; on a terrace of heavy flaming flowers and marble benches blindingly white in the Italian heat. Queer—that contrast in this blurred Corot dusk of greys and browns. Some part of her color vision had died, become absorbed in shadow. An unscrupulous mixing of the strongest paints will produce a pigeon grey or muddy brown. There had been too many colors, she thought, the canvas hurt the eyes, and suddenly they had all run together—cancelling each other, leaving nothing but the residue of their component chemicals. Well—she was glad; she was sick of purple patches—pure line was more beautiful.

But this emotion robbed her of free-will; she could not calculate its strength. It had been a force hid deeply under her consciousness, emerging unexpectedly to dominate it. How could she know which line to follow—the instinctive

impulse, irrational in its demands, or the reasonable obligations her superficial life directed? If one could resist this force, which she doubted now in the face of her desire to yield, should one? Was not the old sensation more legitimate because more fundamental? Or was it just a palpable example of "evil genius" attempting to undermine her sane behavior? If it was Mephistophelean, she was still free because her soul was uncommitted, but a decision must be reached. She would not yield yet by a strong effort of will. She would banish the shaggy-coated Satyr twisted by her tortured eyes from the soft-forming mist beneath a sumach bush. It all seemed pantheistic, absurd. She was acting like a landlocked character in one of Hardy's novels.

The house was drowned in fog as she came up to it, submerged below the mastlike tulip trees. Only the yellow lights from the windows riddled the shroud like mouse holes in a cheese. In the firelit room she found the venerable dachshund on the hearth, reflecting a running pattern of flame against his sleek dark coat, his rabbit-hunting nose pillowed on his paws, the silky ears framing his dazed, somnolent eyes. Across the room sat the other, chiselled into a repose so deep that she hesitated before entering.

"If time could be disintegrated now," she thought, "I could hold this moment static for eternity. . ."

The figure moved, and all the threads of the Chinese coat she wore turned gold in the firelight. Her deep-sunk eyes fastened on the girl as she sank into the chintz-covered chair beside the hearth, exhausted. The well-known surroundings surged in upon her nostalgically, the temptation to unmask her struggle seized her, while unconsciously she fought against the asthmatic progress of the grandfather's clock, velvety insinuating the quarter hours on its golden dial.

"Shall I speak?" she thought, "try to tell her? Sometimes I can't stand this reserve—this secrecy of feeling. But now it's too late—we've been growing individual hedges around ourselves for too many years to tear them down in this short hour." She gave up the attempt and ran her toe absently across the dachshund's back. A thousand sparks shattered the air between them as the fire suddenly leaped into the circlet of diamonds on the thin fingers holding the outstretched cup of tea. The girl took it silently, watching the brooding way in which the hands

dropped back, cupped within each other to her lap, curved hands that were ever crooked together in some task, whether it was infinitesimal embroidery on her childhood dresses, straightening a twisted flower stalk or falling reminiscently among the keys of the old piano. She followed the upward lift of her cloudy hair against the patterned sofa, the column of her neck fluted into thin chords, the deep lines in her face, the eyes, unfocussed once more when she sank back, losing the twin spots of light they held when she spoke. They were black shadows now, below the curving brows, but still they seemed to see beyond her.

"But what?" thought the girl half-frightened, wondering what they visioned through her, through the chair, beyond the walls of the house. She shivered a little. Often it used to be that way; she would look up, about to speak, and see that lost, deep look, so that she forgot, and the words died on her lips, or the thought became a triviality. She was not unsympathetic—it was rather that she saw a greater distance, and the altered perspective robbed other problems of much significance. It was with her that one cursed one's limited horizon, and longed to lift the veil. Curiously blended with this strange passivity was a current of vitality which ran through everything she touched, a magnetizing power that seemed to spring from the brown curves of her hand, furrowed by the garden, quickening into life even the trampled flowers that the dogs prostrated in their careless rambles, an electricity that one felt might almost insulate death itself.

"What is it?" she wondered, "constituting this curious personal equation, a separation I cannot cross. Why should this atmosphere creep over me like slow frost at night, until I am solidified before I can discover it? What keeps her aloof, unbound, consonant with this harmony, but at the same time free? She is so remote."

The flowery tea stabbed through her with the scent of hyacinths and the golden freesias at the window. She must speak, tell her before she went away that nothing else mattered—it was here, here by the fire where the dachshund pursued a dreamy senility, where *she* filled the tea cups silently as the shadows gathered, crowding in close around them, here where life moved soundlessly, and days were full of exercise and sunlight, or rain and worn out books; where to live was effortless and not to live a torture, that

she found the realest happiness, a contentment worn as smoothly as a sea-surrounded stone; to tell her that she could not stay because it was too perfect, too serene, a level still beyond her grasp. She wanted to make her understand that the long months away at college, the long summers, studying or travelling were not to get away from home because it bored her, but to temper a metal merely forged in that earlier dream-life; to try the steel where it found most resistance, and to gain the prerogative of strength to one day make this a reality, not a mere sunken city, like Lyonesse in the ancient fairy tale, where it lay far below the life she must lead, tolling its bells dimly at such times as this.

The older woman raised her eyes, inscrutably levelled against the girl's hesitant glance. She faltered a minute—no, she could not speak. And so it would always be this way—both dumb when it came to emotion, armoured in reticence—a spell as it were that must not be broken lest the whole fall in ruins around their ears.

She went out again into the mist and the darkness. The fog heavy with scent, rolled all the faint aromas of the night into one multiple fragrance, quivering in her nostrils, to catch in her throat. From the pond, the mysterious song of the frogs reached her softly like a dirge. Now that the passion rested there was surcease of pain—only a thin black rim of melancholy seemed to edge her thoughts.

IS IT DEATH?

EDITH STARKS



The world grows dim
And in the starlight
Charon comes for me,
His long back bent across the oar;
But I shall welcome him
For through the river's swollen night
None guide so well as he.
We shall scrape safely on that further shore
Where the old ghosts drift down to greet the new,
And after this long waiting I shall again find you
And clasp your hand, who have known death and all of this
before.

**BLACK POPPIES**

EDITH STARKS



My love for you
Is like black poppies blooming.
Cool in the moonlight
And as darkly mysterious against your cheek,
As softly caressing
As the night air itself.

Langorous in the sunlight, and sombre,
Half-closed, swaying in the breeze,
Dreaming always of the night
When you will press these trembling petals
To your mouth again.
My love for you
Is like black poppies blooming.

PILGRIMAGE DOWNSTREAM

ELIZABETH BOTSFORD



N a full blown August day, old Tom Cook became haunted by a curious restlessness. When the third faded maple leaf drifted past his skiff in the shadowed water, he moved uneasily and shoved out from under the willow bank into the sunlight. Out over the meadow a flock of blackbirds circled raucously in the top of an elm tree. He watched them a moment, squinting into the sun, and a look of surprise deepened in his moist eyes as though he had become conscious of some tremendous fact. Then, abruptly, he drew in his wire line that sang on the sandy bottom, put the oars in the locks and with a few hurried strokes was out in the channel.

In the gray of the following dawn, the rivermen of Minnieska found Tom Cook down at the docks packing his sparse belongings into the stern of his skiff. He stood up at their questions. Beside their sturdiness he looked small and frail. Although he grinned with his wide toothless mouth, his pale eyes held still the tearful puzzlement that had come into them the day before. "I reckon it's about time I was getting home," he said in his thin voice. One of the men held the boat for him while he stepped in, for his hands were trembling. No one spoke and yet the silence was full of knowledge. The prow swung outward into the current. He leaned over his poised oars, his crumpled face sunk behind his knuckles. "Well, boys, goodbye." The rivermen answered in a deep embarrassed chorus which fell flatly on the water. "Goodbye." It did not occur to them to say any more. They stood in a stiff line along the dock and watched him row downstream until a tatter of mist trailed between them. The fog swelled up from the bottom lands, obscuring the sunrise.

Out on the blank river with the fog creeping about him and filling his ancient brain, Tom Cook did not stop to wonder why he was there. He was answering an instinct that had stirred within him. It is probable that he did not even realize what he was doing, for, as he passed camps and fishing holes familiar to him for more than half a century, the years crowded around him with insistent

memories. He had long since lost track of time, living so much in the past as he grew older that it became more real to him than the present. Now, out of the shifting mist figures took shape which were dust, and in the half revelation of shore line and jutting dam he saw himself and his friends in a dim reincarnation. His boat moved more with the impetus of the great swinging river than of his feeble oars, and the downstream motion carried him back through the long quiet years. His mind washed back and forth on the current, like a piece of driftwood.

Under the enormous elm which stood up over Point No Point, Bill Houston and he had slept beneath an overturned skiff in a cloudburst. There, where Indian Slough cut sharply back toward the hills, was his famous hole for bass. On Box Dam, he had sat for hours with old Craig when the crappie were biting. He remembered the sleepiness of the sun on his shoulders. Fifty Four, Bass Island, Belvidere, Crooked Slough, the names made a slow and reminiscent melody in his ears, falling in the rhythm of his oars. Chimney Rock stood clear of the fog with the August noon pouring upon its serried crest. There the ladyslippers grew so thickly that a patch of ground was solid yellow with them. He knew one high slope where you could always find the rare and delicate pink ones—it was a secret of his. He said the flowers over to the empty boat, tasting their fragrance—bellwort, may-apple, hypaticas, honey-suckle, shooting stars. A bunch of full alert shooting stars clenched in the hand of a child who had torn her bare knees on wild rose bushes. Steaks sputtering over a charcoal fire. A launch filled with deep picnic baskets and ferns. Women in stiff white waists, whose skirts swayed graciously as they walked. All this was Chimney Rock.

At Fountain City Tom Cook tied up at a water-logged boat-house. He felt exhausted until he heard John Smoker's voice. A glass of beer cooled his hot throat. He peered blindly about the empty beer-garden, looking for Pete. The brilliance of the river was still in his eyes and head. John Smoker told him Pete was gone. "Down the river?" said Tom dully. His life fell into the bewildering patterns of a kaleidoscope, changing at every touch.

"Maybe," said John Smoker.

"I'll see him," said Tom, "I want to tell him his beer has gone stale again."

"You'll see him," John Smoker told him gently.

He could not understand why the *Lady Grace* was not running between Fountain City and Winona that afternoon, (that decrepit passenger launch which had been abandoned for years). "I thought mebbe they'd tow me down," he complained. "I'm in kind of a hurry." His tired eyes looked frightened again, and his face curled as though he were going to cry. John Smoker saw him off, a little bent man huddled in the middle of his skiff. "Goodbye, Harry," said Tom thoughtfully. The boat slid rapidly downstream. Tom hardly heard the answer. One long and freighted word. "Goodbye." Nothing else.

He passed the head of the Old River and peered down along its still course where the trees hung down, covered with trailing grape vines, from the crumbling banks. The turtles were out on the dry logs, the pickerel working in the weeds, and the redstarts dancing among the dark warm leaves. Once the river packets had steamed over that placid water, and its silent reflections had been shaken by the slow cadenza of the leadman as he flung back the soundings to the pilot. The channel ran in close past Burlinhome's Cottage with its fallen roof. Half a mile farther down he passed a houseboat tied close in to the shore. Weighing on his oars, he stared at it. Funny there was no one home, no girls running bare-legged on the sand, no launch creaking against the dock. It was queer. He had wanted to step there a moment. He could not remember ever having found this camp deserted. He wagged his head sadly. "Goodbye," he said, and shivered in the heat.

Well, he must hurry home. The shadows under the trees looked cool after the glare of the wide river, but the levee was waiting for him, the warm benches, the straying dogs, the swallows ducking out of the high wagon bridge. He could sit still to watch the steam boats dock and barge away, and the fishermens' skiffs slide past with their long poles dangling over the stern. He could sleep in the sun, and his memories would gather close about him protecting him from the heavy years.

Betsy Slough. Now he had only to round Black Bird Island to see the Old Stone House which had been built into the bluff which rose sturdily out of the water. Then he could look down the river to the city in the distance,


behind the tracery of the high bridges, its towers and smokestacks softened by the haze of the blue August afternoon. He paused, with a sense of expectancy rising in his throat, looking at the hills. Suddenly the shadows rose up out of their secretive valleys. The deep breathing of the river faded in his ears.

When the skiff turned the corner, it had whirled around so that Tom was facing downstream. But he did not see the end of his pilgrimage.



PURCHASE

ERNESTINE GILBRETH

TOMORROW Martha would return to college. Today she had come to the city to finish her shopping, to drink in the atmosphere of New York and steep it in her memory. Today she had hurried up and down Fifth Avenue, purchasing, but more often standing before the shop windows, or relaxing, giving herself to the crowd. The incessant motion, the busy click of heels on the pavement always excited her.

She was tired as she turned down Thirty-Fourth Street toward the Tube; that warm kind of fatigue that is nevertheless pleasing. It had been a successful day, gloves, pocket-book, those brown suede slippers with just the right heel, the new hat concealed now in an aristocratic but exceedingly difficult box. Martha looked down at the bundles approvingly. There were certainly a lot of them, every size and description—impossible to hold gracefully. Her arms stretched about them tingled, ached. She was tired, awfully tired. She'd been a fool to wear such high heels shopping; might have known they'd be killing her by the end of the day. Her head throbbed. That blue hat must have shrunk through the summer, or her head—. Certainly her forehead had seemed strangled all day. Perhaps she might be getting cerebral hemorrhage or something. "School-girl swoons in Herald Square. Lovely Miss Martha—" Some dresses in a shop window caught her attention. She stared with distaste at their embroidery and fringe. "Everything but modern plumbing." Someone bumped into her, sent her spinning forward. She gasped and smiled pleasantly. New York. It always gave her that sense of the unexpected, the thrilling realization that she was young, powerful.

She had reached the crossing now. The huge clock in front of Gregg's Inc. indicated five o'clock. Half an hour before her train! That meant that she would have time to slip into the store just for a minute, to recall the summer she had been a salesgirl. It was always such fun to intensify memories before returning to college, to contrast this sort of life humming with physical action and sen-

sation with school, mental indulgence, "opportunity knocking at the door but once."

She would leave tomorrow, returning to her last year. It had been three long years since she had been behind the counter, a contingent flung from department to department, meek, black-dressed and sixteen. She had done it purely for excitement, exulting in her role, admitting only that she came from "Jersey." The answer for some reason had discouraged further questioning, had admitted her to the selling "elite." She had been privileged a totally new side of life, had used it later for her freshman themes, "The Psychology of Selling," a searching essay on floor-walkers, original and rather delightful, she thought. Wonderful field for writing—Gregg's, such a huge place, so rushed, alive with strenuous salesgirls. A good store, catering obviously to the house-aproned type of customer, ponderous and squeaky shoed, grim-faced and violent over the special sales.

Martha hurried into the store, past two guards standing at the entrance. They wouldn't remember her of course. She thought with approval of the felt hat sweeping down over one eye, of her sheer stockings and high heeled shoes. "808 Contingent," but she was Martha now, an individual, all-powerful. She was walking through the main floor, looking critically at "Today's Specials," at the tables piled high with bargains, rayon shirts brilliantly hued, \$.69, hand embroidered nightgowns that seemed made of sheeting, long woolen underwear stretched and begrimed. A busy day, good values! The customers were pushing, elbowing. She watched them distantly. Great, hulking animals—she had never recovered from her disgust at them. The girls looked tired; they always did at five o'clock. Standing all day, or ducking down behind the counter for fresh goods, poor devils! She recalled how their legs must ache behind the knees, how their backs must feel strained, wrenched out of position. Thank heavens she wasn't going back to that—tomorrow.

Her enthusiasm rose as she mounted to the second floor. She stared about her a minute and then jumped on the escalator to the third. She even dared to run up the last few steps, pushing past two customers who swayed and searched frantically for their high black shoes. Young, she was young! Let the sour old things grumble about her;

let them pant and heave to their hearts' content. She hurried to the floor and glanced about her. Sure enough—she had sold in that very place, women's house dresses, wasn't it—striped broadcloth in tremendous sizes? There had been one dreadful customer, most grotesque bulk of a woman, and going to get married that afternoon. Martha remembered trying to stretch her arms about the heaving waist, grunting as she had attempted to tie the belt in the rear somewhere—she would never forget the sensation. That was a good day, all the girls had made their quotas. She went on swiftly from aisle to aisle, surveying the counters quickly. Women's clothes. As usual they were in frightful taste, poor lines and trimming. The store needed a new buyer. Old "Dora" (they always called her that) was getting too ancient; she was so difficult.

Martha found herself looking for anyone who had been there before. There was a red-headed girl like one she had known, but she looked too old, lines about her eyes and mouth. Still—three years, you couldn't tell. Perhaps Mr. Crosby—. She glanced about briskly. He had certainly been insolent, perfectly impossible. But he wouldn't act that way now—indeed no, why he'd just cringe. It was only with the girls that he——.

She found herself in the sweater department. Instinctively she began to finger critically. Much better lot this year—less stripes and a more secure weave. There were still better ones on the counter, arranged in neat piles of every color. She hurried over to make sure. "These are nice—awfully good-looking," she smiled at the girl behind the counter. "I might take one back to school." She had dumped her bundles with a sigh of relief. "There—I'd like a size 32, I think. Isn't that a nice shade of blue!"

The salesgirl blossomed immediately. "You know Miss, I like that the best myself. It would look pretty on you!" There was something young and confidential about her, a radiating friendliness. "Still the green's nice, too. A lot of the young ladies have been buyin' green—" She drew a "green" from its immaculate tissue covering. Martha watched approvingly. Nice girl, she liked her. They began to talk, of the store, the customers. Martha confessed that she had worked in Gregg's once—a contingent—by the end of the summer she had been exhausted—no, she was going back to school, but she might work in the store some day—

a lot of the girls did that when they "got-out." She was relieved to learn that Mr. Crosby had recently been fired, that one of the girls had finally complained. The girl smoothed the sweaters gently. "Sure was time, Miss, he was pretty terrible at times, cutting up something awful, though he never tried nothin' definite on me—"

They talked until Martha suddenly remembered. She had to catch the train home. There was a clock near the escalator—quarter after five. Less than twenty minutes for the Tube and those dreadful stairs on the other end. She would have to tear. "I'll take the green, yes, size 32," the words hurried out, "C.O.D.—I won't have to wait!" She gave her name and address in a frenzy of haste, and swept up the bundles from the counter. The girl was writing busily, mouthing each letter. Martha glanced at her for a minute. She felt something ceremonious, almost sacred in that look. It was as though her two personalities, the salesgirl and the schoolgirl were meeting on common ground, gripping hands mutely, beautifully. Martha realized it suddenly, so sharply that she could have cried. But instead she pressed the bundles to her chest and started to run toward the elevator. No, they would be slow, crowded. She decided on the stairs and wheeled about. Her heels were making a resounding clatter over the floor. "Lightfoot the Deer"—it was her habit to whisper friendly names at herself. She gathered speed, momentum and plunged toward the front of the store.

She was suddenly aware of the guards that seemed to fill the store. But then Gregg's had always viewed every customer as a prospective thief—nothing particularly new about that. You couldn't blame them either; something was missed every day. All the departments boasted of harrowing experiences. Of course they had to look out for things, catering to a class of customer always in search of bargains. Still, there were so many guards, hundreds of them! Martha hurried past, half aware of their grim faces and forbidding stature, of the pearl grey of their uniforms. How suspicious and distrustful they seemed, nerve-rackingly so. Already she had begun to feel guilty, like a criminal on his getaway.

She found the stairs at last. Only one chance in a million that her train would wait, a wreck or something. Still, she'd try—. The bundles were slipping down almost to

her waist. She clutched them, plunging down one step after another. "Stay up ankles!" (they had always been weak, but never like this) "Keep to the steps there, feet, or there'll be hell to pay!" Talking to herself as usual. Perhaps she would outgrow the habit some day, but you couldn't be sure about infantilisms. Grey uniforms melted in and out of the haze. Lord, dear Lord, what a store; Sing Sing must give something of the same impression. But it made you almost want to steal something, that was the awful effect, to steal something just to see whether or not you could—but how foolish! Too great a risk, and besides those grey uniforms weren't meant to conceal a sense of humor. Asinine thing even to imagine!

The door at last! She hurtled through it and out to the street. She found herself emerging from the vest of a fat man. "Pardon me"—but the bundles at least, were still intact. Poor thing! Landing full force like that, must have knocked the wind out of him! She collected her dignity. "Entitled: Hurrying for a train!" Her blasted monologue again; but it cheered her as she started across the street against the traffic, warmed her as she dodged a taxi. The crowd on the side-walk swept her back as she mounted the curb. "Heave ho, my laddie!" She had never felt more completely happy, exuding a sort of individual sunshine. Her shoulders swayed with self-satisfaction. Noise, ceaseless rush, the elevateds roaring by, a policeman whistling and swearing at a smug-faced and apparently deaf taxi-driver. Good old New York! Martha loved it; she felt as though she must tell it so, hug it. "Wonderful, wonderful city!" No other city ever had such a sky sharp and blue above those buildings. No other city—She had bumped headlong into the man selling rubber dolls on the corner. "Pardon me! Always a lady!" She breathed deeply. She must remember every bit of it, even that disgusting little man—store it up for the winter days musty and intellectual. That green sweater would be all right for school, she'd have to pack it in her suitcase—the trunk might burst during the night, as it was—thirty-two was the right size—it wouldn't bag on the shoulders—the girl had said so—nice girl!

Her arms ached—so many bundles—she'd never seen so many! Martha squeezed them approvingly—that nice little pocketbook, the heels on the shoes were just per——” but her thoughts refused to come; they seemed sickeningly to be stiffening, freezing somewhere. “Why, you poor ass, don't tell me you did that!” She had stopped stock still before the subway entrance—of all things, talking out loud to herself *there!* People pushed back and forth, staring at her. What must they think—in the middle of the rush hour, standing bolt still like a blooming dummy! But she hadn't bought it; she didn't want it—my God and there it sat as big as life, all unwrapped and indecent. She stared again. Sure enough, a green sweater, size thirty-two, identical to the one she had sent home. She swayed back and forth. It was too awful—so she had picked it up and run clickety-click out of the store, stolen it! She stood horror-stricken, oblivious of the bumping of the crowd. She would have to be calm, to think. She led herself gently toward a shop window and leaned on it heavily. Picking up the bundles of course—but how dreadful—and what must the nice girl have thought, how could she have any faith in human nature left? All those grey uniforms—and they hadn't even noticed—kleptomaniac, shoplifter, halfwit——

Well, that wasn't constructive thinking. Action, positive action was what she needed. Martha thought of dropping the sweater, of watching it trampled and mashed under incessant feet. She would wave farewell and disappear forever into the subway entrance. Mystery woman! But people didn't throw sweaters around New York streets and disappear. She must go back, return it personally to that nice girl. “I'm awfully sorry. I seem to have gone off with this!” Could she explain? It was the only decent remedy certainly. Besides it would be rather a noble gesture,—honestly personified. But her face felt hot and dry. How funny! Still, there was nothing humorous—nothing at all funny. Fool! Great blurbing fool! She was kicking the pavement now, crushing her bundles together.

She turned and started back across the street. A trolley swung past in front of her. Close shave! She wished she had hit it, had knocked it for a row. The crowd was infuriating, too. She fairly hurled people out of the way. Plunging ahead she felt relieved for a minute.

But suppose she should be caught on the way to the third floor, returning the nasty thing? Nothing very noble about that—distinct anti-climax instead. And all those awful grey uniforms again. She would never get by them, never in the world! By now a general alarm must have been sent through the store anyway. Twenty years old—looks like nice young lady (she did, didn't she?) but—Martha didn't care to fill in the "but"—"wearing blue felt hat and dirty gloves!" She rebuked herself silently. That wasn't nice; no time for joking. The floorwalker might be waiting for her upstairs, in ambush somewhere behind a tree of dresses. He would appear briskly, slightly pink about the eyes. "This young lady took a sweater, did she—just a minute, just a minute!" Important, pencil behind one ear—Martha knew the type.

"Bringing back the sweater." She captioned it neatly, as she started through the revolving door. She was half amused by the sound of it. "My dear, I was never so embarrassed in my life; you didn't say a word all evening!" My goodness, she just insisted on keeping cheery, smile, smile, smile! But she was taking it back—up to the third floor. Tense minute, frightful situation—if it were only a dream from which one could wake—Martha walked forward with an air of determination. If she used the escalator perhaps—What? They weren't even going to let her in? They were going to push her out? Complications! So they were crying for her to keep it; but she didn't need two sweaters—couldn't possibly—. A grey uniform was suddenly before her, eyes cold and stern. She was afraid, desperately afraid. A hand was grasping her arm. "You are under arrest!" She waited breathlessly. No, he wanted her to "get out lady; the store was closing."

"But you don't understand. I want to return something."

She could return it tomorrow. The store opened at nine o'clock every morning. Now it was five-thirty and no customers could enter.

The strain had begun to tell on Martha. She was going to cry. How awful—it would be indecent to cry before a Gregg's guard! Her lips too—that sickening twitch at one corner.

But resolutions shot through her mind suddenly. She would simply have to give it to him. Perhaps it wouldn't be so awful—just take it calmly so—from the pile of bundles

and hand it to him! There was something suddenly glorious in the whole situation. Courage—it would take courage!

Martha realized it at the very moment she found herself placed firmly on the sidewalk. "At nine o'clock tomorrow, lady!" The voice trailed away through the revolving door.

Her heart was pounding with rage. Stupid—why he didn't even deserve to keep his job—blind as an owl—and when she was trying to return it! She could feel anger stiffening her face, a hot, steaming rag of fury. "Listen here," her voice at least was steady. "You'll have to help me then. You see—I took this by mistake." She held out something green, something half-concealed in tissue paper. "It's a sweater. I must have picked it up—by mistake."

The guard shot to attention. Business-like! His eyes gleamed hard, penetrating. Martha was being drawn firmly toward the inner door.

"And now girlie—". Of course he thought she had stolen it. He could keep right on thinking so, too! But that would mean jail.

Martha would have liked to strike out his eyes, to pound his chest with her fist. "I was hurrying—I bet I've missed my train now too—returning the old thing—"

She understood that he was not interested.

"It isn't every customer that would return—I'm so sorry. I came running right back."

An inner struggle seemed to be taking place. She watched him note the price of her shoes, the cut of her suit, finally her face hot and miserable.

Did she look honest? Had she remnants of gentility? For the first time Martha questioned herself impersonally. She pitched her voice lower, a little tearfully. "I'm most embarrassed. I hope you'll pardon me, I really do!" Before she had finished, she realized its perfection; the charm was about to work.

The guard unbent suddenly. My Lord! So he could smile—and such teeth! No wonder he didn't do it more often. He was speaking now, a rollicking lilt to his voice. "We don't have this happen much, Miss. It's all right though!"

Then unbelievably, she was out on the street again. But now there was no feeling of relief, no appreciation of the

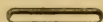
humorous. Instead she was muttering to herself—"Fool—blasted idiot!" Martha pushed her way toward the tube, using her elbows mercilessly. There, so there! She set her teeth resolutely but it didn't help. Fool, fool, senseless, blundering fool! Her heels caught the rhythm in a strange unhappy clatter.

But looking around at the mass of faces, impersonal, disinterested, she began to be comforted. They didn't know; they couldn't guess! What a joke!



BEFORE CATCHING THE 12.15 TRAIN

CONSTANCE PARDEE




I wish I knew why clocks are slow
And when this class will let me go.
Will there be time to catch my train;
And is it really going to rain?
Or is it cold enough to snow?

Why communistic movements grow
And what they mean I do not know.
What is the matter with my brain?
I wish I knew.

O will the sweet cool night wind blow
Among the pines, and stars hang low?
And will you take me down the lane
Where small spring voices sing, again?
Why do I have to love you so?
I wish I knew.

FLYING BOATS

ELLEN ROBINSON

OR an hour David had been waiting for a bite. He drew in his home-made tackle and laid it carefully beside him. Then he stood up and stretched himself, his arms high above his head. He scowled down at the still, black water.

He was standing on a bridge, and a very unusual bridge, too, for it stopped in the middle of the river. Twenty years earlier the failure of a short-lived and over-ambitious railroad company had resulted in this incomplete structure—two cement arches and then a blunt end, with four rusty rails still extending to within a foot of the edge. It was on this last foot of cement that David now stood, teetering back and forth a little, as if taunting the water with his security.

He reached behind his worm-can and brought out a handful of those bright-colored squares which kindergarten teachers turn to so many absorbing uses. He began folding one of them slowly, his dirty thumb-nail pressing the creases and his tongue passing hesitatingly over his lower lip. Finally he held out a little orange boat and surveyed it with one eye shut. He took a leafy twig from a pile he had evidently brought with him and stuck it up in the center as a mast. Then with a long, arc-like swing of his arm he sent the boat over the edge to the water below, and immediately knelt to watch it. It had landed on its side and was sinking fast. Stubbornly he set to work on a blue square. Again his tongue moved slowly between his lips.

A shadow passed over his work; he looked up so quickly that he bit his tongue and grimaced. A girl in a pink cotton dress stood near him, staring down into the water. After a few minutes she turned toward him.

"What you doing, sonny?"

"Making boats."

A long silence. She watched his fingers. At last he threw the blue boat over and it sank as the other had.

"Too light, sonny. Try putting dirt in 'em."

He appeared to consider the suggestion and finally drew out of his back pocket an egg-shaped pebble, quite smooth and white. He placed it beside him while he made another boat; then he arranged the pebble as ballast and tossed the boat out; but the stone fell out before the tiny craft hit the water.

"Lemme show you." She snatched a shiny black sheet of paper and began to fold quickly, her long orange-red nails trembling a little. Silently she held out her hand and he gave her a pebble. She continued to fold, somehow enclosing the weight underneath the center of the boat. He took it in his hand, examined it carefully, and threw it out. It landed gracefully, floating on down the river and around the bend.

"It it's heavier, it falls closer?" he said.

"Yes." She was gazing directly down over the end of the bridge.

"If I jumped from here, would I make much of a splash?"

She jerked around toward him. "What made you think of that?"

"Well, I know about Horatius. . ."

"Who? . . . Oh, never mind." She sighed.

"Would I?"

"Would you what?"

"Splash."

"Not much. Too little, I guess."

A long pause. She wiped the palms of her hands on a bright handkerchief.

"Would you?"

"Would I what?"

"Splash."

"No—yes—I don't know." She seemed to forget him and began to talk to herself in a low voice. He tried to make a boat like hers, but he spoiled several and crumpled them up and threw them away. He struggled with a yellow one. She clutched his arm.

"Say, got a pencil, sonny?"

Leaning forward he felt in his back pocket again and brought out a stub of red crayon. She grabbed the last square of paper, another black one, and began to write on the white back of it.

He had just thrown the yellow boat over, and with fair success. She folded the paper once.

"Listen, sonny."

He looked at her; her large mouth jerked.

"You know the gas station on the state road? Right across from the post-office?"

He nodded. "It's red."

"Yes, and you know Bill there?"

He thought a minute. "He took Annie Wilcox to the Chatauqua every night last week."

"Oh, I know, I know . . . all right. Get this straight now, sonny. You gotta go right now and give this to Bill. Hear?"

He felt the slippery surface of the paper. She took out a string of large green beads and held them out to him. They looked like marbles; he put them in his pocket.

He started back to the village by a short cut known only to himself, first heading toward an old deserted barn. He had just rounded one of its grey, rotten corners, when the black paper slipped from his hand. He bent to pick it up—and stopped suddenly in a half-crouched position, listening. Then he straightened up and turned back. "I guess she did do it. Sounded like a good one, too," he said aloud.

He reached the end of the bridge and looked down. Everything was the same, except for a few widening circles on the dark water and four or five bubbles. "Didn't even get to the bend either. Must be pretty deep."

He sat down and twisted about uncomfortably until he had removed another pebble from his back pocket. He played with it a bit and then began to crease the black paper, but with the written side out.


"Can't ever see the black ones from 'way up here."

It landed nicely. "Never had one with figures. It's pretty."

He wound his line about his pole and, slinging his worm-can over one shoulder, went off toward the old grey barn.

THROUGH A GLASS, DARKLY

RUTH RODNEY KING

HE countryside slipped swiftly past the window as the train pushed into the coming twilight. Quickly a town would pass, with tall factories and houses that soon grew fewer, and became countryside once more. The girl looking out the window noticed this absently as she thought "It is over. I've seen him and said good-bye. It is over." It had been so swift, like a cloud passing over the sun.

Going down through this landscape the day before, she had felt a little sick with excitement. She had thought of the week-end with the tremulous delight that anticipation arouses. She was going to see him, for the first time since he had been in Africa. That was seven months. She was going to see him, be with him, the whole week-end. Her heart surged suddenly in realization, and a tremulous joyousness filled her so that she sang beneath her breath, looking out the window. "See him, see him. I'm going to see him."

Then she had told herself. "Now, this is your chance. Show him—Oh, make him feel it again. Be clever, gracious, friendly. Ah, that's it, friendly, but not eager. No, no, not too eager. That time last spring—No, no more of that. Be master all the time. Make him feel it again." She had planned very clearly what she would do, when the train pulled into the station, incredibly sooner than she expected, and she was on the platform before she was prepared to meet him, unable to see clearly in the broad sunlight after the dark train.

He had come toward her, taken her suitcase, shaken hands with her, and she was in the roadster, while he started the car, with familiar brown hands on the wheel, his familiar bare head twisted over his shoulder to watch the traffic as he swung around the street out of the station. Everything about him and about being with him seemed so familiar that her tense excitement diminished to nervousness that forced her to talk rapidly about the train trip, the nice day, and the cold spring, pulling on one glove as she talked, meticulously fitting each finger with the

fingers of her other hand. She was aware that she was not fulfilling her new-made plans, but the strain of the present kept her chattering on, scarcely daring to relax enough to look at him.

At last she had turned her head, and seeing him so clearly, she caught her breath. Oh, she was there, beside him, with him. But she had said, "Well, how are you, since your long trip?"

He had turned his blue eyes on her, faintly smiling. "Just the same," he had answered.

And so he was in every respect the same, "but," she told herself with quick defiance, "I'll do it. I'll be master. But there's plenty of time. All afternoon, and tonight, and tomorrow. All that time—" as she realized this her breath quickened. Anything could happen in all that time. She made conversation: "Was Africa nice?"

"Hardly nice, very interesting. Dirty place though—Fez. Thousands of little shops, arches, walls, mosques, you know the type. The Arabs I liked. They all over study the Koran and sit cross-legged for hours in meditative silence. 'If Allah wills it' is their philosophy. I like that, too. But I grew tired of it."

"Is there anything you don't grow tired of?"

"No."

A flat answer, and she had resented it, and resented the conversation. "Why does he always go off that way? He never thinks of me even when I'm here, beside him. He liked the Arabs. But I'll make him, I'll make him. Soon, now, soon." They were at his house then. She ran up the steps to greet his mother and left him to change for luncheon. Her excitement rose again while she was alone. Now, she thought, now it will all start.

But through luncheon he had argued about a book review with his father, and she had made talk with his mother. After lunch he said, "Let's play tennis. We can get a lovely tan, today."

The tennis had been nice. They talked little and played hard. It seemed to bridge the strangeness better than conversation. They played till supper time and walked home in silence. She felt relaxed, and drawn closer to him by the peace of the spring evening. As they entered the cool dark house and flung themselves into low chairs to smoke and rest, fear laid a finger on her heart; the time was slipping—

but there's tonight, tonight, she cried to herself. The mystery of a spring night.

Her spirits rose swiftly, and impelled by them she crossed to where he lay sprawled, a cigarette in one lean hand, a magazine in the other.

"It's so nice to be seeing you again," she said smiling down at him. He looked up at her and smiled absently in return.

"I think the tripe in this sheet is incredible. Listen to this—" and he read her an article which she did not hear, looking at his curly head and brown cheek.

Supper passed as luncheon had. The evening was soft and dark, with faint stars. They had gone for a long ride into the country. Being with him, she felt suspended in time, unable to think, or carry out what she wished to think, and the evening slipped by in careless easy chatter, and comfortable silences. When they had returned, and were walking up the lawn, he had pulled her to him gently, and kissed her. It had seemed a part of the soft night, and she had felt no other emotion at it. It was only later, when she was in bed that she knew most of the time was gone. "He kissed you, you fool! Why didn't you do something then? Oh, tomorrow I will! Tomorrow!"

She awoke late in the morning, and had a lonely breakfast. He was still asleep, his mother said. She had felt a hurt resentment that he had not wanted to wake early, and she wished for him while she watched his mother straighten a pile of books, stopping to blow ashes off the table top.

"He smokes too much," she said to the girl, who agreed. Talking like that, as if he were a naughty little boy, and so intimately, with his own mother. When he came down, very late, she had been brisk in her greeting. She sat at the table while he ate, and they had talked desultorily. She felt wildly impatient to be off, to do something, to start, but the weight of the present moment crushed her thoughts into impotent anxiety.

But they had played tennis again, and were in the middle of a game when his father came out on the verandah and called to them. He had been confused by the daylight saving system, and her train left sooner than they had expected. In excited haste she had packed and said good-bye to his parents, and was in the roadster, while his

brown hands busied with the car, his head over his shoulder he backed out of the drive.

"It's been grand, seeing you again." Oh, quick! there's no time left, no time. "I've enjoyed it. You change so little. It's nice to find something that changes little."

He smiled at her. His blue eyes—oh hurry, hurry. But what can I say? What can I do?

The dream-like quality of the moment persisted and she was unable to focus her thoughts. They were at the station, shaking hands. A despairing mist swirled around her thoughts. It's over, it's over. She said "Good-bye, and thank you so much. Good-bye."

A smile, bare head in the sun, and the train pulling away as he walked back to the car. She had found a seat beside a window, and looked out at the twilight country absently as she thought, "It's over. I've seen him, and said good-bye. It's all over."



"OLD MEN SITTING IN THE SUN"

FRANCES RANNEY



LD Mr. Mase sat in the warm afternoon sunlight, watching the people on the verandah of the hotel. Girls with bare arms and tanned legs, men in flannels or golf knickers, older women sipping their tea—he liked to watch them all, sitting there in the sun and dreaming dreams about them.

Young people he liked best of all, their senseless chatter and their noisy laughter. He wished that one of them, that tall girl with the laughing eyes, perhaps, might come over and talk to him for a few minutes some day. But of course they had no time to waste on an old man, a twisted, crippled old man at that. They were always so busy, those young ones—swimming, golf, and tennis all day and dancing until three in the morning. Nothing seemed to tire them, to bore them; but then, they were young.

He, too, had been like that. He liked to congratulate himself that he had done everything, everything. And there was nothing he regretted. After the first stroke, his doctor had said, "You'll have to take it easy, man—you've been going it too hard." He had only laughed and bought a new polo pony. Why live at all if you have to mark time, he had reasoned? The second stroke had paralyzed his left side and made him almost helpless, but still he regretted nothing he had done. He had paid for what he had received at the hands of Fate, and what he had received he deemed worth the price.

Now, an old man, bent and shrivelled, he sat waiting in the Bermuda sun, waiting for the stroke that would put an end to everything. Occasionally, he would hear women gossiping over their teacups—"Pathetic, isn't he? I do pity him. So handsome, too, and, my dear, they say—" Or he would see them watch with sympathetic eyes his painful progress down the verandah steps. Pity him? Bah! He pitied them, their clumsy bodies and their faded eyes. What he loved was youth!

The sun was casting oblique shadows on the verandah floor. Soon it would be time for the tea-dancing to begin. He would go inside where he could watch the whirling

couples. He reached for his cane and tried to pull himself to his feet.

"Mr. Mase!" A solicitous, anxious voice hurtled itself through the afternoon warmth.

The old man looked up and saw a strong, capable-looking woman leave the shade of one of the huge parasols on the lawn and come hastily toward him. Her eyes squinted against the glare of sunlight on the white hotel, and her mouth was puckered with anxiety.

Mr. Mase sat back in his chair and watched her approach, peevishly. He had forgotten Miss Whitby for the moment; but she was one he could not forget for long. For the past three years she had been as a part of his physical being, doing for him the things he could no longer do, running errands for him, writing letters, combining the offices of nurse, secretary, and companion, until now, with her professional, yet flurried solicitude, she seemed to him almost parasitic. At first he had admired her strength and energy, had realized his helplessness without her, but of late she had become almost intolerable to him. Her vitality of movement when he walked only with difficulty, her ceaseless care for his well-being and comfort, her worried brows and anxious mouth—why couldn't she leave him alone for a time?

Miss Whitby hurried on to the verandah, breathless and a little damp. "Do be careful, Mr. Mase! Why didn't you call me if you wanted to get up?"

She put a strong arm about his shoulders and half lifted him to his feet. The old man shook the arm aside impatiently and pounded his cane on the floor.

"Get away! Get away! I can walk all right, I guess."

Slowly, painfully, he moved across the porch, dragging his paralyzed leg and leaning heavily on his cane. "Poor old man, I pity him," he heard someone say. "But goodness knows, I pity his nurse the more. What she must put up with!"

He smiled to himself—"What she must put up with!" Of course Miss Whitby put up with a lot. That was what he paid her for. If only she wouldn't keep reminding him that he was old, that he was helpless!

Inside the orchestra was tuning up and the tables around the edge of the floor were rapidly filling. Miss Whitby pulled his chair out for him, and he sank into it with a

sigh of relief. Every day it was getting harder for him to move. Soon he would have nothing to look forward to except sitting in the sun, sitting, and watching—and waiting.

"Tea, with cream," Miss Whitby was telling the waiter. "And plain bread and butter—cakes don't seem to agree with him."

"Bread and butter!" he exploded. "Can't I even order what I want? Get away! Get away! Leave me alone!"

The floor was as quiet and glassy as a Wisconsin lake on a summer evening, he thought. Pretty girls in cool, floating dresses fluttered from table to table like great pastel-colored butterflies. He wished that one would float his way. But no, they had no time! Sitting in the sun—that was all old men were good for.

The orchestra started up with a crash, then swung into a slippery, lilting melody. "It's a Precious Little Thing Called Love," he heard a girl at the table next to his sing to her companion. Honeymooners, he catalogued them briefly. He was sorry. They were too young, too happy to be married. Marriage was for the middle-aged. He was glad he had never succumbed.

Couple after couple whirled into the middle of the floor, dipping, swirling, side-stepping, until the whole room became an ever-changing kaleidoscope of tanned, laughing faces, pastel colors, and white flannel trouser legs. He was happy through the process of identification. He himself was floating along the mirrored floor, that tall girl in yellow in his arms.

"I've brought you a magazine, Mr. Mase." The harried, anxious voice grated against his ear drums and scarred the surface of his dream.

Magazine be damned! He didn't want to read. "Take it away. Don't want it. Leave me alone!" he shouted testily.

"But I should think you'd want to do something," persisted the solicitous voice. "You can't just sit all day."

Mr. Mase did not answer her; he was already lost in the mazes of his dream. "Lover, come back to me," the violinist was wailing through a megaphone. He had never gone back, never—

The girl in the yellow dress swung by him, her eyes laughing into his. Suddenly he had an idea. He would

dance! What had been holding him back all these years? The mere words of an over-cautious doctor? He'd show him; he'd show Miss Whitby; he'd show those lumpy old women on the verandah; he'd show everyone! Why, the music alone would carry him along, once he got to his feet.

He reached for his cane and tried to pull himself up. His hands shook with the effort, and his breath came in hard, fast gusts. Would he have to call for Miss Whitby to help him? No, by God, he would not! He'd get up by himself. The music beat against his head, pounding, pounding. He sank back into the chair again. A drink, that was what he needed, a good strong Scotch and soda. Tea—bah! Miss Whitby be damned!

He summoned a waiter.

The Scotch seemed to fill his veins with a cool, energizing fire. How many? Why it was four years since he had tasted anything stronger than tea. What a fool he'd been! He felt better already.

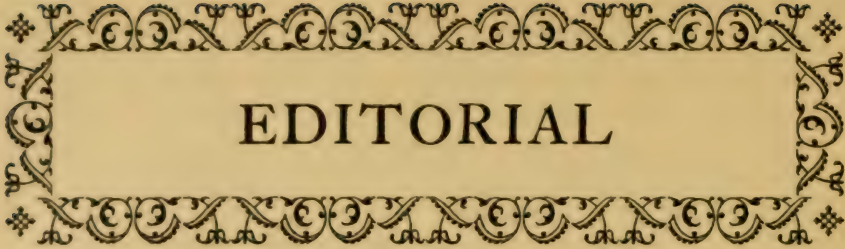
Once more he reached for his cane. The music was pulsing more rapidly now. Faster and faster the couples whirled, until the whole room was a hazy blur of color and sound.

A high, thin voice, higher, even, than the shrieking saxophones, came floating through the blur to him. It held a familiarly anxious note. "Mr. Mase!" it called from a great distance. "Do be careful!"

The old man glared about the room, but he could see nothing, nothing save the blurring, changing colors, dipping, whirling about. That had been Miss Whitby's voice. Where was the fool? Thought she could boss him, did she? Well, he'd show her. He was going to dance!

His muscles strained until they stood out in great knots on his neck as he tried to pull himself to his feet. He could feel the warm blood rushing toward his head. He must get up before Miss Whitby came. He must dance!

The music, pounding rhythmically, frantically on, crashed against his body in heavy waves of sound. His knees crumpled under him and something inside his head snapped. He was falling, falling. It was true what Miss Whitby had said. The only thing old men were good for was sitting in the sun.



EDITORIAL

In a recent review of MONTHLY the advertisers were praised for, at least, our worthy reviewer found, they aspired, and advertised those aspirations, to something "new and different." Behold a more than worthy promptness in taking a hint. The advertisers' word was taken for the originality of their products. Certainly. One should always take an advertiser's word. MONTHLY has bought herself a new dress and like the professional mannequin her dress is to advertise the products of her house. She is too vain in her new clothes? Well, perhaps; but she has found a new idea with which to back them up.

Did we say a new idea?—because we were mistaken. It is not a new idea at all. In adopting it MONTHLY is only following the example of her elders and betters. It is only a new idea to her, it is a very old and wellworn idea to many other magazines. It has often seemed a pity that, in a magazine that comes as often as every month, the literary form should be so strictly and entirely limited to the regular monthly progression of the writing courses in College. One can trace the assignments of plot and character-drawing, the accumulation of hours, in the contents of MONTHLY and this leads often to a certain monotony of form. It is obvious that in a college of this size there are other subjects worth writing and reading about than those one chooses for a theme course.

And so with her new dress (thank you, she is glad you like it) MONTHLY announces the opening of a Forum. Yes, we called it a Forum but we would be glad of any more original suggestions. "Arose by any other name would smell as sweet." There has always been more than enough material in College that should be written up, but that finds no place either in *Weekly*, MONTHLY or the late *Cat*. MONTHLY institutes a home for these very important waifs and strays. For

example everyone is interested in the new dormitories which will soon be started, the consequent abolishment of old houses and the effect which this change of location will have upon the college as a whole. The Forum is a place for your opinion on any such interesting subject that deserves to be well written up. There are plenty of them both in College and outside, those subjects which form the basis for so many interesting discussions. Do you remember the table conversations through the weeks Mr. Fay was lecturing on reparations or, to hark back, during the presidential elections in the fall? It has always seemed a pity that the College literary magazine should represent so little the current trend of thought and opinion among the students; and we are all of us almost as interested in learning what others are thinking as we are in telling others what we think. It is moreover hoped that the faculty opinions may from time to time reveal themselves in MONTHLY's forum.

MONTHLY is optimistic about her new venture. Her new cover has helped to give her the courage of her convictions and she is further encouraged by the generosity of the Alumnae in this Senior issue. She hopes to start her Forum in the fall and that it will find her with a wider representation of contributors.



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BOOK REVIEWS

THE BURNING FOUNTAIN

ELEANOR CARROL CHILTON

The John Day Co. 1929

A critic on the *New York Times* recently reviewed *The Burning Fountain* as "a poet's novel," tentatively implying some disparagement of it on this account. It is not clear whether he means that the book is too poetic to exist as prose, or whether it is a book which appeals particularly and exclusively to poets—one of which, I gather, he is not. As is the way with labels, this disposes too simply of a rather difficult novel. Whichever interpretation is attributed to the reviewer's phrase, either one is equally undiscerning; they overlook the serious intent with which it was written, and fasten or try to fasten on what is purposely elusive. It does not, of course, need to be defended against such criticism, but its special qualities are brought out by the juxtaposition. The term "poetic" as applied to prose has many vague implications, but, broadly, it suggests a fundamental unimportance, an indefiniteness of plan, a certain tendency to pause and ramify with delightful inconsequence, and style a little too lyrical to be good. Since the critic obviously is not using the word in Virginia Woolf's sense, it must be these faults that he condemns in *The Burning Fountain*, on what evidence I cannot see. One of the questions, if not the special question, of the book has to do with the nature of reality. It is not often that metaphysical theory is embodied in the characters of a novel: when it is, such a novel is apt to be more than ordinary, and unlikely to be described appropriately as "poetic."

The answer Miss Chilton offers to the question is a double one. Like Miriam Henderson in Dorothy Richardson's series, the characters of *The Burning Fountain*, Lynneth, of course, excepted, are projections of an im-

agination which is Idealistic in the strict philosophic sense. They act on the principle that the essence of the universe is mental; they are free subjects of their own wills. When Janet and Douglas were married they considered soberly whether they wanted children and how many. Alan and Joan were the results, in a sense, of rational prearrangement, and, as Janet hoped, they grew up to be interesting and pleasant people, depending on their own ability to reason and to will. All of them, Alan, Joan, Claire and Douglas, have the consciousness of self, the analytical, introspective attitude of mind which is evident in so many of the young characters in modern novels. But there is Lynne, the child of impulse and storm-madness, grown into a girl of nineteen, polite but abstracted, asking nothing of anyone except freedom to go out under the rain and lightning. She is an Eternal Principle in the shape of a human being, never a human being acting according to principle. And whatever the principle is that she embodies,—innocence, impersonality, "elemental tenderness," blind instinct,—it is definitely non-rational: the spiritual substance which she *is* cannot be understood on Idealistic premises. All of the other Kenwyns, and Claire and Douglas, are wholly human beings, and they are guided by rational law, but Lynne's life suggests that beyond the phenomenal world there is a reality other than that of mind. If, in all strength, it is manifested in this world it conflicts with the manifestation of Mind, and cannot continue to exist. It kills itself, being too powerful, except as it is expressed frugally, sown shallow in every man. Without effort, Lynne had over all those in the Kenwyn house an influence so strong as to be nearly tangible, and yet so subtle as to defy analysis. Each of these very sane people had a strange, sometimes perverse, sympathy for her. She seemed in some way to be inside of them. Perhaps this other reality she represents is not only non-rational, but suprarational. Irrespective of whether or not this speculation of Miss Chilton's is true,—and, after all who shall say?—it is worth writing a book about, and probably worth the thought of that anti-poet, the reviewer on the *New York Times*, who, seated at a desk that seemed fairly solid and "looking out at a couple of hotels made of brick by men with trowels, found it difficult to succumb to Miss Chilton's fantasy." Fantasy is another odd label for *The Burning Fountain*.

The execution of the idea is at once very able and a little out of balance. The novel is planned with extreme care, swinging in a circle beginning at The Tree with the passion of Donald and Janet which produced Lynneth, and ending at The Tree with her death by lightning. There is practically no plot, and what narrative there is develops casually, without special regard for sequence. The interest centers in the people surrounding Lynneth and in the effect she produces on them. We are told that Lynneth behaves badly in thunderstorms, we begin to feel the dread of them that stirs the Kenwyns, and then, in the eventual April storm, we realize something of the madness which made her try to kill Donald and all the pity that gave Joan the desire and the strength to set her free. With a minimum of incident, Miss Chilton produces very dramatic suspense.

The same care for pattern shows in the thoughts of the characters, which may revolve and intertwine among seemingly alien elements but which are brought into relation, sometimes tenuously, with the movement of the novel. It is in characterization, however, that Miss Chilton's balance is not perfect. Lynneth is indefinite, neither real or unreal; she is comprehensible only in her influence on others, she never exists in her own right. The rest of the characters are interesting and well differentiated, especially Douglas. It is to the method that the author uses to define them that objection may be made. Their conversations are brief, relatively unimportant, but authentic. If Miss Chilton had trusted more to the dialogue she handles so sensitively and accurately, she would have avoided the extended tedious pages in which each character describes himself by his thoughts. They would produce a more direct, convincing impression if they *acted* what they were, and their thoughts, clarified, more distinct, and less expository, would profit by the reduction.

In a recent book on prose writing Miss Edith Rickert quotes passages from Conrad, Meredith, Hudson, and others which, in sustained intensity, tone, and rhythm are prose poems. There are many passages in *The Burning Fountain* of which the same may be said, particularly in Part One and Part Three. "Then, far off, thunder rolled over the sky. The spell of the long stillness was broken and a gust of wind came across the hills. They could see it coming, as the forest bent before it, laying a red-gold

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carpet of triumph. It came closer and closer. Now it was a silver track in the meadow, and, a breath later, the flowers about them stirred, Janet's wide skirts and a lock of her hair blew sideways, the trees rocked and swayed over their restless patches of shadow, and the first golden leaf fell and caught in Janet's dark hair. It was only for a moment. The wind trailed off, pushing the opposite hillside before it, but the hypnotic quiet was gone with the fallen leaf, and over their heads the leaves were still stirring on motionless branches." In this sense, it is true that Miss Chilton's prose proves that she can write poetry when she cares to. The images she uses have the heightened imagination and a freshness of perception which mark many of her poems in *Fire and Sleet and Candlelight*. The level of writing,—and it is a high one,—is maintained with unusual ease, even when the thought substance of her characters grows redundant.

S. S. S.

FURTHER POEMS OF EMILY DICKINSON

Ed. MARTHA DICKINSON BIANCHI

Little, Brown & Co. 1929

"Not any more to be lacked,
Not any more to be known—
Denizens of
Significance
For a span so worn—
Even Nature, Herself,
Has forgot it is there—
Too elate of her multitudes
To retain despair.

Of the ones that pursued it
Suing it not to go—
Some have solaced the longing
To accompany;

Some rescinded the wrench—
Others—shall I say?
Plated the residue of
Woe
With monotony."

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The last part of this poem seems to express the feeling of most of the *Further Poems of Emily Dickinson*, which have just been discovered and published after having been withheld by her sister. The volume is rather disappointing beside *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, and the poem quoted indicates a reason. Lascelles Abercrombie says that withdrawing from the external world is not always a merely negative gesture; it often represents a very positive faith in the greater value of inner experience—in the superiority of things *conceived* over things *perceived*. This was true of Emily Dickinson—when her world was shattered, she built herself another which was entirely one of vision and soundless contemplation, of “quietness distilled,” interrupted only by small low sounds like the hum of the bee. Her images were mostly of things vividly seen, and others were apt to be achieved by visual figures—“caravans of sound,” and “the blue, uncertain, stumbling buzz” of the fly. Some of these visual figures are present in the new volume though they are less frequent than in the first, but the book on the whole seems to point to the fact that the world of escape she built for herself has become a prison, and that she wearied of too much inwardness and of too much contemplation substituted for human contacts. She seems to long for freedom from herself and not to know quite how to attain it:

“Me from Myself to banish
Had I art,
Impregnable my fortress
Unto foreign heart.

But since Myself assault Me
How have I peace,
Except by subjugating
Consciousness?
And since We’re mutual
Monarch,
How this be
Except by abdication
Me—or Me?”

Aside from this weariness, the qualities of the new book are not very different from those of the earlier poems. She displays the same rapt intimacy with nature, though as has

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been justly pointed out, the word "mystic" is inappropriate for her in that it denies her unequalled general sensibility; for mysticism implies indiscriminate ecstasy. The following poem reveals a deep delight in nature, but the very manner of expression is an argument against the idea of the poet's identifying herself with it or of her taking it only as the outward manifestation of a supreme and ultimate reality:

"Heaven has different signs to me;
 Sometimes I think that noon
 Is but a symbol of the place,
 And when again at dawn
 A mighty look runs round the world
 And settles in the hills,
 An awe if it should be like that
 Upon the ignorance steals.

* * *

The rapture of concluded day
 Returning to the West,—
 All these remind us of the place
 That men call 'Paradise'."

Her mysticism, if she has any trace of this quality, certainly is not for external nature; rather it is shown in her "identification of love and death in eternity," and this feeling is very fully revealed in the new book. Its most passionate expression is perhaps the following poem:

"A wife at daybreak I shall be,
 Sunrise, hast thou a flag for me?
 At midnight I am yet a maid—
 How short it takes to make it bride!
 Then, Midnight, I have passed from thee
 Unto the East and Victory.

Midnight, "Good night"
 I hear them call.
 The angels bustle in the hall,
 Softly my Future climbs the stair,
 I fumble at my childhood's prayer—
 So soon to be a child no more!
 Eternity, I'm coming, Sir,—
 Master, I've seen that face before."

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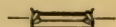
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This feeling and the reverence for nature Emily Dickinson exhibits should be adequate refutation of the charge of irreverence which is often made against her. The irreverence is for the Puritan conception of God, and it is probably a misinterpretation of this fact combined with her whimsical charm which refers to God as "Papa above," that has led critics to find a feeling which does not exist. An excellent example of her attitude toward the Puritan God is found in this book:

"God is a distant, stately Lover,
Woos, so He tells us, by His Son.
Surely a vicarious courtship!
Miles' and Priscilla's such a one.
But lest the soul like fair Priscilla,
Choose the envoy and spurn the Groom,
Vouches, with hyperbolic archness,
Miles and John Alden
Are synonym."

But she makes fun only of an attitude which she finds untrue and despicable. The following poem is as devout as any hymn:

"Life is what we make it,
Death we do not know;
Christ's acquaintance with him
Justifies him, though,

He would trust no stranger,
Other could betray,
Just his own endorsement
That sufficeth me."

Emily Dickinson's whole feeling toward death, which is one of her most remarkable qualities, is closely bound up with her brilliant understanding, gained through great anguish, of the human heart and its sufferings. "The tragedy of Emily Dickinson's life, a great love tasted in ecstasy and put by in honor, is given to the world, like Shakespeare's sonnets, in quintessence, not in circumstance." This quintessence is first a longing for death as the ultimate satisfaction of her love, which develops into a more general, though not a less passionate, feeling that death is pleasure rather than pain—

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You could not spare, you know.

* * *

And thought of them so fair invites,
It looks too tawdry grace
To stay behind with just the toys
We bought to ease their place."

It is in such poems as this that the new book of Emily Dickinson's does not suffer by comparison with the old. Perhaps they were withheld because they seemed not reticent enough to be given to the world, while the best of the less personal poems had already been published and those left for this volume must of necessity seem a little disappointing.

The technical quality of the work in the book, as one might expect, does not differ greatly from that in the earlier one. There is the same passionate brevity and incisiveness, the same absence of artistic finish and carelessness of everything but the absolutely definitive word and phrase. The poet is less concerned with art than with expressing the profound feelings of the human heart, and her keen sense of words makes this expression perfect, though she gives a distinct impression of first thought rather than afterthought. This characteristic makes her poetry sometimes as difficult of immediate comprehension as Blake's, but on this point the final comment has been made by T. W. Higginson in his edition of selections from her poems, "After all, when a thought takes one's breath away, a lesson on grammar seems an impertinence."

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